









MEMOIRS

OF

MARIE VON ARNHEIM.

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MEMOIRS  
WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

OF

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

NO CHANGE, NO PAUSE, NO HOPE, NO FEAR

LONDON

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS

1848

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“No change, no pause, no hope! yet I endure.”

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MINNERS

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

WRITTEN BY LAMBERT.

The manuscript of which I now present to the  
British public a faithful translation, was placed  
in my hands three years ago by a very dear  
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"Let her wishes be fulfilled, in her lifetime  
be assured that others may profit by the sad ex-  
periences of her life; but do not publish them in  
Germany, where she has been known and loved."

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE manuscript, of which I now present to the British public a faithful translation, was placed in my hands three years ago by a very dear friend, with the following words :

“ Let her wishes be fulfilled ; let her Memoirs go abroad, that others may profit by the sad experience of her life ; but do not publish them in Germany, where she has been known and loved. One, and only one, other restriction I lay upon

you—before these Memoirs see the light my eyes must have closed for ever.”

The time appointed has already come. I have wept over the grave of my early and beloved friend, and have since found in the sacred duty he imposed an occupation, often painful in the extreme, and at all times mournful, but not the less congenial to the tone of feeling excited within me by his loss.

The motives which have led me to execute my trust in this country may appear to need explanation, and this can be simply given as follows. Although not the land of my birth, I have spent in England the greater portion of my life; it has long since become the home of my affections, and its tongue the language of my heart. But besides these considerations, I have been further directed, and finally decided in my choice, by the belief that

in England, next to my own country, the tone of thought and feeling which pervades the following pages will find the most perfect comprehension and the quickest response.

February 1st, 1848.



# MEMOIRS

OF

MARIE VON ARNHEIM.

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## INTRODUCTION.

AT length my resolution is fixed ; at length I have gained courage to look with firm and searching gaze into the past ! To look at it ? What else have I seen through eight long years of agony ? Of what else have I thought, dreamt, but that terrible past ? And now I am about to declare all, to tell to the world that which heretofore has been unuttered, which even in this moment seems to me almost unutterable.

I have hitherto allowed myself to be deterred

from writing the history of my life by two considerations : first, by my own repugnance to give tangible form to that which even in thought and memory overwhelms me ; secondly, by the dread lest the few yet remaining of those who once loved me, and who by me are still adored, should in any way discover who was the miserable subject of the narrative. The first obstacle I have overcome through a sense of duty—yes, let not any one, when further acquainted with my story, turn back and look with idle mockery upon the words ; a sense of duty compels me to hold up as a warning to all similarly constituted with myself the fate which has been mine—which might, under similar circumstances, if unwarned, be theirs. As to the second objection, have I really any just grounds to fear discovery ? In laying bare the inmost recesses of a guilty heart—in making myself for the first time clearly, fully known—do I not become at once disguised in spirit to the eyes of all who ever knew me ? For if in the wasted, shrunken form which bends over this paper—the lifeless

hollow eye, the livid cheek upon which days of remorse and nights of anguish have left such furrows as are seldom found even upon the aged face—none could trace identity with the once beautiful and graceful, and still youthful Marie; still less in the defaced and fearful mental portrait herein unveiled could they recognise her whom in their blindly fond and tender affection they once looked upon as an angel of goodness and of truth. No; I am safe, and may speak freely, without danger of adding another sorrow to those my sin has inflicted upon all I loved; and truly, faithfully, so far as words can do so, will I disclose my tale.

Reader! I would ask your pity and your prayers, but that ere this reaches your hand, the soul which guides mine will be where human pity can no longer soothe nor prayers avail. Thither must thou one day follow,—remember this, and be merciful!

## CHAPTER I.

MY father was the only son of a nobleman residing in the duchy of Baden. His mother, an Italian lady of extreme beauty and talent, died soon after his birth ; but her place was well supplied by a maiden sister of my grandfather's who resided in the house, and watched over the early years of the bereaved child as though he had been her own. When still very young he was sent to be educated in England, where, amongst other branches of science, he made himself in some degree acquainted with medicine ; not indeed with the design of making it a profession—an independent fortune rendering this unnecessary—but merely as a matter of taste, and with a view

to usefulness amongst the peasantry in his own neighbourhood.

When little more than of age he married the daughter of a village pastor, a Saxon girl, whom he met at Dresden, whither she had come on a visit to some friends. She was very lovely and of pleasing manners, possessed an affectionate heart and a sweet temper; but her education, as is not unusual in Germany amongst women in the middle class, had been almost entirely confined to the acquirement of such knowledge and habits as are considered likely to prove useful in the daily routine of domestic life. The young couple spent the first year of their married life with my mother's parents in the village of \* \* \*, about twenty miles from Dresden. Feeling it to be his duty to reside upon his own estates, my father afterwards fixed his abode at the family mansion in the duchy of Baden, within a mile of the little town of \* \* \*, where, besides the endearing associations of early recollection and the charm of extreme beauty of scenery, he had the happiness of being near his

earliest and most devoted friend, the Count von Ehrenstein, who with his family occupied a castle within a short distance.

I almost shrink from the attempt to describe my father, for I feel that his peculiar nature was made up of elements too delicate, too ideal, to be easily conveyed to the mind by words. Were it even in my power to portray him truly as he appeared in daily life, as husband, father and friend—a personification of intellectual and moral harmony and purity such as a poet might delight to imagine—I should be met with doubting looks, and the word *unnatural* would assuredly be applied to the description, as it so often is to that which is only uncommon.

He was a truly noble being, rich in the nobility of both head and heart. Truth was his idol—not in a limited sense—but that eternal truth which is the essence of all that is good and beautiful in art and nature. He had an extraordinary power of extracting what was best from all things. His fine imagination could revel in the dreamy mysti-

cism of German metaphysics, no less than in the refined wit and seductive sentimentalism of the French school of philosophy, charmed by the talent and ingenuity there displayed, and yet untainted by—nay, it appeared nearly unconscious of—the contaminating influences which they almost invariably exercise over hearts less pure and minds constructed of less simple elements. Alas ! he forgot that from the same flower whence the bee innocuously sips honey, rank poison may be distilled. He dreamed not that the studies, which to him were only sources of elevating thought and ennobling sentiment, could exert any injurious influence on his child !

He knew little of the world, for his own abstracted and ideal nature had preserved him from its evil influences ; nor was he practically aware of the temptations to which each and all, according to their various characters, are exposed in their journey through life. He became a father whilst still himself a mere child in real knowledge of man's strange and inconsistent nature. Truth

appeared to him so distinct in all its graceful loveliness, that he knew not how any could fail to see, to love, and to choose it. "Why," said he, "fetter a child with dogmas of theology and wordy principles, when Nature speaks to him of the glory of its great Creator, and the intuitive perception of the exquisite harmony of all things teaches the lesson of universal love? No, my children shall be untrammelled; never will I say to them, this or that you must believe; never shall my poor and meagre language dare to interpret the voice of God to their souls." Such was the determination of my father, and to it he adhered strictly. My mother, a careful and busy housewife, had no idea that a woman's duties as wife and mother could extend beyond an affectionate attention to the personal comfort of her family and a cheerful happy contentment of demeanour. Thus she was grieved at seeing the distaste which I early testified to all household occupations, and often manifested an irritation, otherwise foreign to her nature and habits, upon

finding me seated in a corner devouring a book, whilst other employments of infinitely greater importance in her eyes were neglected. At such times my father ever took my part; and upon one occasion having expressed his opinion and wishes with more decision than usual, my mother gave up the point, and I was left thenceforward to the peaceful enjoyment of my own tastes.

I was my parents' eldest child at home; their first, a daughter, had been born within a year after their marriage, whilst they were still at my grandfather's house; and before its appearance they had allowed themselves to be persuaded to promise that it should at once be consigned to the care of my mother's parents, who would thus in some degree be indemnified for the loss of their own daughter. From this time the little exile had never visited her father's roof. Three children followed in rapid succession, but all died immediately after birth; and when at length, just as my eldest sister had attained her tenth year, I entered the world, much anxiety was naturally felt

on my account, lest I too should share a like fate. Would to God that I had !

Three years after my birth my mother bore a son. Well do I remember that morning, when awakened by a bustle and hurrying to and fro in the house, and finding myself, contrary to custom, quite alone, I lay in a state of fear and trembling, now putting my head under the bed-clothes, now peeping out into the grey dawning light to see whether anything were visible. At length the nurse appeared, and with a radiant countenance exclaimed, "You have a brother, Fraulein Marie ! get up quickly and come to kiss him."

"You have a brother !"—how did the words echo through my childish heart ! How, even at this moment, can I recall the delicious entrancing sensations with which I sprang up, and without waiting to be dressed bounded into my mother's room ? She lay there, pale but happy-looking, and by her side, so rolled up as scarcely to allow a glimpse of the tiny face, my brother ! Who can say that a child does not feel ? As I was held up,

and bent forward with a mixed and indefinable sensation of awe and longing to kiss the sleeping babe, a love sprang up in my soul which through life has been—in death will remain—unchanged.

## CHAPTER II.

THE birth of my brother was the first æra in my existence. Every previous recollection is dim ; but from this epoch all is clear and vivid. The sudden awakening of my heart to a lively and entirely new emotion had the effect of rousing all my latent faculties. I have often heard my father say, that from the moment I had seen my brother I seemed to become a thinking, reasoning being. I no longer wearied my nurse and mother by taxing their invention for amusements. To look at my baby brother was a never-ending source of enjoyment ; and by the tender solicitude which I manifested about all his little wants and comforts, my poor mother was led to form anticipations in regard to me which were destined never to be

realized ; and my character, by afterwards developing itself in a direction entirely different from what she could have wished, caused her much disappointment and vexation. As might be expected, the passionate love with which I regarded the little Alfred met with its reward in a full return. He grew up a delicate, fragile being, combining the soft and exquisitely fair complexion, the golden hair and deep blue eye of his Saxon mother, with the dreamy, melancholy, yet kindling expression which characterized his more southern father. In his playful moments you would have said that such had been the ideal of Domenichino's soft and graceful infant cherubs ; and again, when grave,—and he was often so,—with his pensive eye fixed, not upon anything visible, yet not, you felt, upon vacancy, there was that in his gentle, noble, loving countenance which suggested the idea that here might Raphael have found a model, worthy as aught of earthly mould could be, for an infant Christ. He soon became as inseparable from me as my shadow ; and my parents,

seeing the watchful care with which I hung around him, learned to trust me with a charge for which by my age I should scarcely have seemed fitted.

When I was about six years old, my mother sent me one day with a little basket containing some wine and choice fruits to the cottage of a poor sick woman who lived about a mile distant. As it was summer, and the day warm and sunny, she allowed me to take Alfred with me; and it would be difficult to say which of us most enjoyed the expedition, or whether the invalid were not more grateful for the kindly attention from her landlord's children than for the delicacies they brought to tempt her appetite. As we loitered along the road in returning, now sitting down to rest, now plucking the wild flowers which my father loved, to make a nosegay for him, I heard a shout as of alarm at a distance, and looking up saw two or three persons rushing along the road behind us. A confused sense of danger came over me, not for myself, but for my precious charge. I

seized him in my arms and hurried towards home, fortunately not far distant, whilst the shouts became louder, and "Mad dog, mad dog!" resounded in my ears, and, child though I was, conveyed to my mind a sense of indescribable horror. Fear lent me wings, and love gave me strength. I stopped not, nor glanced backwards, until screaming "Save him, save him!" and fainting, but still holding the terrified child with a death-like grasp, I sank at my mother's feet.

It was some weeks before I recovered from this over-exertion of my childish strength and spirits. A slight fever confined me to my bed for several days, and during this time it was found necessary to allow Alfred to be constantly with me. So severe had been the shock upon my nerves, so entirely had terror for him taken hold upon my imagination, that whenever he was absent my eyes wandered restlessly about; and it was only when he re-appeared, that a quiet, satisfied smile took the place of anxiety; and only with his hand in mine, or his little head resting on the pillow by my side,

could I gain a few moments' repose. This incident, if possible, increased my affection for him; and the sweet child seemed to be in some degree aware of what I had done, and all I had suffered for him. When I read—for even at that early age books had supplanted dolls and playthings in my heart, and occupied nearly all my time—little Alfred sat beside or played about me, now calling my attention to some new discovery by the ringing joyous laugh with which he welcomed it, now almost painfully arresting my thoughts by one of the deep, peculiar sighs heard at times even in the cradle of those upon whom Nature has bestowed the dubious gift of extreme sensibility.

My education at this time, and always, was conducted according to my father's peculiar opinions. The greater part of each day was spent with him in the study of Latin and Greek, and he gave me also a thorough knowledge of my own and of the Italian and French languages. I was in the constant habit of reading history with him,

and as to general literature was left entirely to my own fancy, untrammelled by restrictions of any kind. I wish not here to enter upon the subject of education at large; too much has been said and written upon it already; and this and that theory is taken up and applied indiscriminately to individual characters, when a careful study of the qualities of each, and an adaptation to their separate requirements, would do more good than any artificial plan taken at random from the most carefully devised treatise.

Whether any other plan than that adopted by my father might have wrought out, so far as I was concerned, a different result, I can only conjecture; yet surely, O my father! you knew not what you did, when without one word of caution, without a fixed principle, ignorant of man's nature in general and still more ignorant of all which peculiarly marked my own, you left me to drift among the perilous shoals of metaphysical speculation, bewildered by the mists of a vague though fascinating scepticism. The false and dreamy but

often poetical forms of a merely sentimental religion enchanted and lured me from those simple truths which might have guided and saved me,—and then left me to sink, and rise no more ! Yet wherefore, my beloved father, do I blame you ? you did but leave me as you yourself had once been left. Your simple, true and beautiful nature found its way through all in safety : how then should you have feared that from the same fountain whence you drank a pure and life-giving stream, your child—your Marie, could imbibe poison ?

## CHAPTER III.

It would be impossible for me to give any idea of the perfect happiness in which my days were now spent. It seemed as if, except through sympathy with others, sorrow could never touch our home. I attended my father when he visited the poor, who all loved me, because I felt and sympathized with all. The children flocked around me when I entered the village; the old people blessed me; and oh, how my heart exulted in the happiness which I felt it was mine to bestow!

My brother's nature was singularly precocious, and in him I had soon a companion in most of my studies, who made them appear more delightful than ever. We read out of the same books, assisted each other in clearing up difficulties, and

became daily more idolatrously attached to one another and to our parents, and more loving towards the whole world.

When I was about eleven years of age, and Alfred eight, the Count von Ehrenstein died, leaving my father guardian to his only son, who was but a little older than myself, and had been my playfellow from the earliest time either of us could remember. He was a bright, joyous being, as keenly alive to ideal beauty as ourselves, full of genius, and of a high and manly spirit, which was never long depressed by outward circumstances. It was not that he wanted depth of feeling; but, gifted with an extraordinary elasticity of mind, uninterrupted health, and an imagination so vivid and fertile that the slightest touch upon any of its chords was sufficient to wrap his whole being in a music of its own, and banish for the time every thought unconnected with its self-created harmony, it was impossible that outward things could long subdue or even vex him. As my father loved him tenderly, and preferred con-

tinuing the home education which his own parent had commenced—especially as by this means his widowed mother was not deprived of the comfort of his society—he now became the companion of our studies, as he had long been the partaker of our amusements. For some weeks his countenance bore traces of sincere sorrow, for he had been deeply attached to his father ; but by degrees his buoyant spirit regained its natural element, and in the new arrangements which brought him to us daily Alfred and I found a fresh source of happiness.

There was much in Eugene's character which rendered him a peculiarly desirable companion for us ; he had the same poetry of nature, there was no jarring of taste or sentiment, and he had a boundless power of sympathy, which enabled him to offer it even when that which called it forth was foreign to his own experience. Thus, although to his healthy spirit the constitutional melancholy which at times hung over us was at first a mystery, he never used against it the coarse arms of

ridicule with which some well-meaning and even good-natured persons seek to combat a temper of mind which they can neither comprehend nor excuse. His bright countenance carried in itself a charm which even without the aid of words began to work its magic spell; and before he had been long by our side, even in our gravest moments, we were listening in wrapt ecstasy to some of the chivalrous feats of his latest hero, or joining in a merry peal of laughter as he exhibited the last effort of his pencil in burlesque illustration of some humorous subject.

I will here mention a few occurrences which took place during these blessed years, tending to show the state of our feelings towards each other. To some they may appear trivial, but to me it has ever seemed that the merest trifles connected with the development of the childish or even infant mind and heart are not unworthy the attention of the grey-haired man. Besides, I may be forgiven for lingering yet a moment amidst the hallowed memories of youth. Its

hopes have perished, its rainbow visions vanished, and the flowers which burst forth in its early spring into untimely luxuriance withered ere the summer's dawn; yet so sweet, so lovely were they, that even in death they retain a faint perfume—a holy beauty which sometimes lulls my weary senses into a temporary oblivion of all that I would fain forget for ever.

## CHAPTER IV.

OUR house was situated upon a slope commanding a splendid prospect of the pine-clad mountains of the Black Forest. At the foot of the garden flowed a clear and rapid river, and my father had taken advantage of a sudden winding in its course to form a little bay or basin for the convenience of the family in bathing. A magnificent weeping willow overshadowed this spot, and here we used to sit and read during the long summer days ; and our happiest hours being spent under its shade, Eugene had long since named the friendly tree our "Paradise." One day, about a year after the death of the Count von Ehrenstein, as I pushed aside the branches to enter, I saw Alfred standing upon the seat and busily occupied in carving something

upon the bark. "Don't look yet, Marie! don't look till I tell you to do so," he cried, hearing my step.

I stood watching the swan as it glided over the water in the sunshine, until he said, "Now, Marie, now look!"

I did so, but only saw his name and my own, inclosed within a rude imitation of a wreathed serpent. I smiled, and looked inquiringly at him.

"I was sitting here alone, Marie," he said, "and thinking over our happy life, and wondering what might be before us, and whether we could ever feel otherwise towards each other than we do at present; it seemed to me impossible that we should become changed, and I felt that our love and our life are inseparable. Then as I thought of all the hours spent under this tree, everything pleasant and everything sorrowful that ever happened rose up like living things around me. For a moment it appeared to me as if they were real; and then all passed away, and a sense of desola-

tion came over me, such as I had never experienced before. For the first time I knew what the words 'the past' mean, and that a time must come when everything would be 'the past.' I became very sad, and the idea occurred to me that our tree would live when we were no more, and that I would like to carve our names upon it, and wreath them with what papa told me yesterday was the emblem of eternity; and then I was so happy!"

"And forgot me!" said a voice behind us. We turned, and met a reproachful glance from Eugene.

"No, dearest Eugene, we did not; indeed we did not forget you, nor ever shall," I said.

He made no answer, but taking out a pen-knife began working on the tree, and in a few moments his name appeared carved within the charmed circle, itself forming an inner one around our names. "Now," he said with triumph sparkling in his dark eyes, "now you cannot forget me!"

Not long after this my brother one evening

showed signs of illness; his cheek was flushed, although his limbs shivered; and my father, finding next morning that he had every symptom of fever, desired that I should be entirely separated from him. This rendered me inconsolable; never having been a day, seldom an hour, apart from this loved brother since his birth, I knew not how to live without him; and in leaving him thus in sickness it seemed to me that I was giving up a sister's privilege. My mother indeed was with him constantly, and nursed him with all a mother's tenderness and love; but even this failed to comfort me; for it seemed to me that whilst she performed her duty I neglected mine, and I was miserable. Eugene, who shared in all my anxiety, and desired no less than I to be with the invalid, tried to console me, and thought we were both most hardly used; but so far as he was concerned I saw clearly that my parents had acted rightly.

"You are not his brother, dear Eugene, as I am his sister," said I one day, as we sat under

the willow-tree, after Alfred's illness had endured a week, and loss of sleep and anxiety had begun to tell upon my cheek.

"Look there," said Eugene, pointing to the names carved upon the bark; "am I not his brother?"

"Yes," said my father, who just then came to seek us, "you will, I trust, ever be brothers in love and confidence, dear Eugene; but remember that you are the only son of a widowed mother, and that in wilfully running any risk which might rob her of her last earthly hope, you would be acting with an egotism little worthy of yourself, and which might involve your friend—all your friends here—in sorrow and self-upbraiding."

The poor boy looked down discountenanced, for he now felt that in the desire to see his friend he had forgotten the duty he owed to his gentle and affectionate mother. He was silent; but I clasped my hands round my father, and said passionately, "Let me go to him, papa! I shall die if you do not; the infection could not do me so much harm

as this miserable anxiety, which will not let me sleep or rest one moment ; I cannot, indeed I cannot endure it longer,—I must see him.”

“ You shall then, Marie ; and rest assured that, had your brother needed your care, I never should have hesitated to admit you to him. As it was, I wished to spare your youth the chance of an illness, which might prove very trying to one so delicately framed as yourself ; but perhaps I was to blame in forgetting that the throbbings of affection in a young heart may become as wild and dangerous as those of fever itself. Come, I will take a middle course,—you may look at Alfred, but for his sake as well as your own, you must not approach him nearly, nor remain more than a few minutes in his room.”

“ Oh, thank you, thank you, papa ; I will remember !” I exclaimed, breaking away and flying towards Alfred’s door. I opened it gently and passed in. He lay upon the bed apparently sleeping, paler and thinner than I had ever seen him, and by his side sat my mother quietly occu-

pied in sewing. The slight noise I made caused her to look round.

“Marie!” she exclaimed in an accent of astonishment and alarm,—and “Marie!” at the same moment cried Alfred, awakened by the sound, his pale face becoming crimson with delight,—“Oh, my own darling Marie!”

In a moment my father’s injunctions, my own resolution to obey him, the fear of injuring the invalid,—all were forgotten, and I was beside him, our lips closely pressed together, and our arms tightly clasped around each other’s necks.

The consequences were such as might be expected—I took the fever and suffered much more severely than Alfred had done. For three weeks I hovered unconsciously between life and death. But my time was not yet come. Slowly and with a feeling of extreme languor I began to recover; but it was long before I was able to resume my former employments or even to leave my room. Eugene was not allowed to see either of us until all danger of infection was over; and when at

length my father put a period to our quarantine, we agreed to see each other first under the willow, already hallowed by so many tender recollections. It was a silent meeting; our hearts were too full for words, for the idea which we had all so lately realized of possible separation for ever had given something of a holy character to the nature of our love. We were happy, but it was some days before our young spirits recovered their tone or even Eugene could laugh as was his wont. He however was the first to do so, and with the influence which he had ever the power of exercising over us, he soon drove away all traces of depression; and, excepting that we now better knew the depth of the love we bore each other, we became as we had been before.

Our next trial arrived from Eugene's side. A brother of his father's, living at Vienna, expressed a strong wish that he and the Countess should pay him a visit, and it was determined that they should set out the ensuing spring. This was a sad blow to us all. In vain Eugene's mother and

guardian represented to him the enjoyment he would find in new scenes and in companionship with his young relations. He could not imagine pleasure unconnected with his friends here, and he was quite sure that his cousins would only make him more melancholy by reminding him that he had had playfellows so much dearer.

His ardent spirit almost chafed one day under an attempt of mine to console him by alluding to the pleasure we should find in writing to each other.

“Ah, Marie! I fear you care little for me,” he said reproachfully; “whilst Alfred is with you my absence will scarcely be felt.”

I could not speak, but the large drops rolled down my cheek, and my heart swelled with a feeling it had never known before.

“Marie,” said Eugene with deep emotion, “if you could know how dearly I love you, how my very soul is bound up in yours, and how I feel when I see that Alfred is all the world to you, and that you can be happy without me! And

then I picture to myself how you will soon be a woman, and a beautiful one; and how you may love some one else, besides Alfred, better than you do me—and then I shall die.”

“Eugene, you are unkind; I shall never love any one better than I do you, except Alfred, and even now I believe I hardly know which I love best. Dear, dear Eugene, you too are my brother; do not talk again as you have done just now; you hurt me deeply.”

“Forgive me, Marie, forgive me for loving you too much,” he said tenderly, kissing away the tears as they rolled down my cheeks. He then left me to meditate over what he had said, of my soon becoming a woman, and loving some one else better than himself—and to come to the firm conviction that no such event could ever under any circumstances take place.

## CHAPTER V.

THE day before Eugene set out he brought over and consigned to my charge two pet birds and a beautiful Italian greyhound, which had always attended his footsteps to our house; at the same time he put upon my finger a ring, with one large bright diamond sparkling in its centre, saying, "When you look at that, Marie, let it remind you of my love; it is not less pure and imperishable."

I know that some will smile doubtingly at hearing such language from the lips of a boy little more than fifteen years of age; but those who do so know not a boyish nature as it may be; still less can they understand it as it was in one, the very essence of whose being was poetry, and

whose early acquaintance with the story of the heroic deeds of chivalry, and with the gentle yet powerful influence whence they derived their source, had enabled him long since to understand by what name to call the delightful but restless feeling which had taken possession of his heart.

For some days after the departure of our friend we were as miserable as even he could have desired. For the first time in our lives my father had to complain of inattentive pupils; but he did so gently and kindly, for he knew the cause, and perhaps was inwardly not displeased to see this sign of affection towards our young companion. Nor were we alone dispirited and unhappy: the little birds sat upon their perch with ruffled feathers, eyeing askance the strange hand which offered them food, and seeming too sad even to attempt to seek relief in their own sweet notes.

Carlo (as the greyhound was called) showed his usual affection for us all, but it was melancholy to see how the poor fellow would run to the door each time it opened, with eager expectation, only

to return with his tail between his legs and his head almost touching the ground; whilst his joyous bark of welcome for him who was looked for, but who did not enter, subsided at the same time into a low pitiful whine. He would then look up into Alfred's face or mine, lick our hands, and, crouching close to our feet, lie down until another sound at the door aroused him to fresh hope and fresh disappointment.

The first occurrence which enlivened us was the arrival of a letter from the traveller, who had reached Munich, and seemed to be enchanted in spite of himself with the fresh beauty of the city and the wonders of art which it contained. His letter, one of the few precious relics of those happy times which I have retained, lies beside me, and I will transcribe a part of it as being peculiarly characteristic of his tone of thought and feeling:—

“The country through which we passed in coming here is very beautiful, but, wanting you, the sunshine seemed less bright, the grass less green, and the concert of the birds less melodious

than they used to be; and although mamma thought the April lights and shades flitted over the landscape as a painter's hand would have guided them, to me they seemed dull and monotonous, as I compared them in memory with the far lovelier effects often produced upon the wood and mountain, dell and river, about our own dear Paradise by the Claude-like light of an autumnal sunset. Once, as a sudden turning in the road brought us within view of a beautiful cascade, foaming over precipitous rocks, and scattering its spray over the rich and luxuriant foliage of the trees and shrubs which grew on its verge, there to hang glittering like variegated jewels in the sunshine, I was quite enchanted; and accustomed to know no joy unconnected with your loved presence, I exclaimed, 'O Marie!' A kiss from mamma recalled me to my senses, and she said with one of her sweet smiles, 'Here is only your mother, Eugene—but you are your mother's all.' There was more in her tone of voice, as she uttered this, than in the words themselves; and I was very sorry; for I

felt that, whilst indulging my own selfish regrets, I had neglected my dear, kind, tender mother; and so ever since I have tried to be cheerful, and not to let her think my heart is all at \* \* \*; and the very effort has been its own reward, for I do already feel happier, and begin to look forward hopefully to the time when we shall meet again.

“I am trying to keep a journal, and it may perhaps give you a faint idea of what I enjoy—faint, indeed! for what are words when one wants to express feelings? One piece of sculpture I must mention, for I have just returned from gazing upon it until my whole soul was so filled with its ideal beauty, that no other image than that of Marie could have found a vacant spot there. It is a torso, supposed to represent Ilioneus, one of the sons of Niobe, at the moment when falling on his knees; with upturned face and outstretched arms, he endeavours to avert the dart of Apollo, about to be hurled against him. Exquisite, beyond all description exquisite, is that model of youthful grace, of soft and almost feminine

loveliness. O Marie ! were you here, you would gaze and gaze until the form had become perfect in your imagination—you would see the young and angel countenance full of prayer and mortal anguish—the tender limbs rounded in Nature's finest mould, thrilling already at the fancied touch of death—you would hear the cry of deep despairing agony ; and echoing it, with tears bitter almost as those of Niobe herself, you would spring forward, throw your arms around the beauteous boy, and strive to shield him with your life. My eyes remained rivetted upon the statue till the fiction of the poet had become an absorbing and overwhelming reality. It was the touch of the cold marble which first awoke me from my vision ; and startled and ashamed of my excitement I looked around—happily the room was empty. Is it not strange that every outward expression of strong emotion should be accompanied by a feeling similar to that which ought only to be the attendant upon evil thoughts and actions ? One can scarcely fancy it to be natural, and yet we see it in chil-

dren at so early an age, that it seems as though it must be an instinctive provision made by nature to save those who feel deeply and passionately from unveiling their inmost thoughts before the cold eye of the apathetic or vulgar observer, who would see but matter of ridicule in all that to us appears most sacred.       \*     \*     \*     \*     \*

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Mamma calls me, dearest Marie; and I must hastily say farewell. Ever your own

“EUGENE.

Eugene had been several months gone, and we continued to have long and most entertaining letters from him. His cousins were good-natured, his uncle kind, and at Vienna there was always some novelty to charm away the hours unoccupied by masters or study. At his uncle's house he met with the most distinguished literary and scientific characters of the day: his hospitable doors were always open to foreigners from every nation. Englishmen were especial favourites; and Eugene wrote that the early and well-grounded know-

ledge of their language, which had been imparted to him by my father, had enabled him, without any difficulty or hesitation, to make himself understood, and fully to enjoy the conversation which was often carried on entirely in that tongue at the Count Von Ehrenstein's table. Yet notwithstanding all the fascinating allurements which met him in the great city, his heart seemed to yearn towards his own quiet home, and the friends of his childhood and youth who still remained there. His affection (as all true and deep affection does) but increased with absence, and nothing could exceed the disappointment which he felt when, at the expiration of the term originally fixed upon for their visit, his mother consented to remain for at least another year. To Alfred and me this news was a grievous blow; but our minds were diverted from dwelling upon it, before very long, by what was to us a most unexpected event, namely, the birth of a little sister, who was welcomed as a child of their old-age by my parents, whilst by my brother and myself her arrival was

hailed with unbounded delight. There was no end to our conjectures as to what she would be like, or to our anticipations of all the happiness we should find in this new treasure.

On one of those beautiful days which sometimes visit us towards the close of autumn, ere the winter frosts set in, when all is so bright and genial that one almost fancies summer has arisen again from her light slumbers to cheer and bless us with a farewell smile, ere sinking into her long and unbroken rest, I was sitting under the shade of our favourite tree absorbed in Jean Paul's "Titan." It was here that I always loved to bring his works, for it seemed to me as if the breathings of his pure, gentle and loving nature became a part of the universal harmony, and found an echo in the song of the birds, the murmur of the river, and the sighing of our graceful willow. Suddenly the spell by which I was entranced was broken by the joyous voice of Alfred, as he exclaimed, "Marie, Marie, we are going to Dresden!—is not that delightful?" and he clapped his hands with childish glee.

I looked up amazed.

“It is true, indeed ! papa told me himself that he had business there, which would detain him for some months ; and he says he will take us too. Oh it is so delightful ! and we shall see a great many places ; but there is one thing, and when I looked sorry about it, papa said, ‘There is always something we should like changed, however happy we may be.’ Mamma and little Agnes will not go ; mamma thinks baby too young ; and beside this, she says she would rather remain at home, as she should not care for seeing everything as we do. But after all, baby is always sleeping now, and when we come back mamma says she will be quite different, able to know us all, and love us.”

At this moment the dinner-bell sounded ; and returning to the house, we found my mother seated in an easy-chair at the head of the table, for the first time since her confinement, and greeted her return amongst us with heartfelt pleasure.

We had but just commenced dinner when the

servant handed a packet of letters to my father. As he read he cast an anxious glance towards my mother.

“What is it, Edward?” she said; “have you received bad news? Don’t be afraid to tell me the truth, for I am quite strong now.”

“It is from a friend of your father’s, my love, who announces—mentions—that he has been very ill.”

“That is not all, Edward,” said my mother; “I see by your face that there is something more, and worse: do tell me all at once!”

“Yes, dearest Anna, I will; it would be vain to strive to conceal it from you; there is indeed sad news—your kind, good father is no more!”

My poor mother, whose feelings were very violent, became greatly agitated; for although five-and-twenty years had elapsed since she had left her parents’ roof a young and happy wife, still in her simple and affectionate nature her love for them had remained unimpaired by the many new and tender claims upon her heart.

When in some degree recovered and sufficiently composed, my father read the letter to her, and said, "Your mother will be very desolate now, dear Anna; we must write at once and offer her a home here. She can meet us at Dresden, and we may all return together."

"Yes, dear Edward; my poor mother will be happier with us than she could be elsewhere. But Barbara?" she added in a dubious and inquiring tone.

"She, of course, must come too," answered my father; and I thought I heard a quick though smothered sigh.

## CHAPTER VI.

I HAVE before said that I had never seen my sister, neither had I heard much of her. When my father returned about three years previous to this time from a visit to my grandfather's, whither he had been called by business, Alfred and I had assailed him with questions relative to our unknown sister, to which he had replied with an air of constraint, and even of sorrow, at that time quite incomprehensible to us. To Alfred's eager inquiry, whether Barbara resembled me, he answered simply in the negative, and we could not either then, or at any subsequent period, win from him the slightest description of her appearance, manner or disposition. Young as we then were, this extraordinary reserve upon our father's part could not

fail to astonish us. Our own hearts yearned towards our sister, and we felt an intense interest in all that concerned her, which was rather heightened than subdued by the mystery which our parent's evident disinclination to speak upon the subject cast over it. But nothing occurred in any way calculated to enlighten us. We often spoke to each other of Barbara, and sometimes ventured to express to our father the earnest desire we felt to see and know her, and the hope that ere long this might be gratified. But years passed by without any prospect of its fulfilment; and excepting when mentioned by Alfred or myself, our sister's name was never uttered in the family circle. Now, when my grandfather's death occasioned an allusion to her long-delayed return, it was made in a manner so very different from what would have appeared natural to parents when contemplating a speedy reunion with an absent child, that all our former surprise and curiosity was re-awakened.

"How very strange it is," said Alfred to me on

the evening of this day, "that we should know so little of our sister! I wonder why papa did not tell us more of her, and what can be the reason that he sighed when he spoke of her coming home. Do you not feel pleased, Marie, at the thought that we shall see her at last, and have her here always? She too will be happier when restored to her home, than she can be living so far away from us all. However kind other relatives might be to me, I think I should always have considered it as little better than banishment to live as she has done, removed to such a distance from parents, and sisters and brother."

I participated fully in all Alfred's sentiments; and scarcely a day, or even hour now passed, in which we did not in some way allude to Barbara's arrival, and project plans to increase her happiness, and ensure to her, from the first moment, the feelings of a welcome and beloved member of our family.

It had been arranged that we were to be joined

at Dresden by my grandmother and Barbara, and this joyous anticipation was alone wanting to perfect the delight with which my brother and I had looked forward to our journey. We spent hours daily in studying plans for our route, in order that we might be enabled to visit all within our reach that was interesting ; but when it was finally arranged that our sister was to form one of the party in returning, as each day spent upon the road must necessarily postpone the meeting which we longed for, we entreated my father to permit us to go direct to Dresden, and keep all our visits to other places for the journey homewards, as we should then have the additional enjoyment which our newly-found sister's presence would afford. My father listened to our eager entreaties and arguments without interruption. He was, I am sure, pleased that we should use them ; but there was something sorrowful in the smile with which he looked upon us in answering, "You forget, dear children, that the routes we have already laid out for our journey to and from Dresden are

so circuitous, and include so many points of interest, that it would be quite impossible for us to embrace, in our homeward course alone, all you desire to see, without occupying much more time than we can afford to give to it. It is very natural and right that you should wish Barbara to share your pleasures, but I fear the plan is not feasible. We must for the present let all remain as it has been arranged: perhaps at some future time you may be able to revisit the same scenes in company with your sister."

The sadness of the smile with which my father began this speech, and the sigh which followed its conclusion, did not pass unobserved by us; and again the oppressive sense of mystery in some way connected with our unknown sister, though how or of what nature we did not even attempt to divine, recurred. But other and more pleasing feelings quickly dispelled this painful one: the day of our departure was now fast approaching, and preparations for the journey, together with farewell visits to the poor people in the neigh-

bourhood, who were inconsolable at the prospect of our six months' absence, left us little time for reflection.

## CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE commencing a new epoch in my life, I may here remark, that if, in describing my own and my brother's earlier years, I have not thought it necessary to mention the little fits of childish passion and waywardness to which we sometimes gave way, the omission has not been caused by any desire that we should appear to have been faultless, but rather by the feeling that such occurrences are in nowise characteristic, being common to all our race, at an age when a strong will has outstripped the development of the reason and the affections. But I must not pass over in equal silence a certain impetuosity of temper, and a daring hardihood of action and opinion, which, as I grew older, manifested themselves, though at

rare intervals, in my own character, and which, had they been justly estimated, might have suggested to those around me that the usually calm, smooth exterior of my daily conduct was far from being the result of a passionless nature, but rather of a depth of feeling which the mere ordinary occurrences of every-day life were insufficient to ruffle.

I cannot however now call to mind having at any time given way to this deep-seated vehemence of temperament through considerations of a merely personal or selfish nature ; nor do I think that motives so unworthy could at any time have roused me thoroughly. But my emotions were almost uncontrollable when I heard of, or saw, injustice done to others, the strong tyrannizing over the weak, the coarse callous and worldly torturing and trampling upon the being born for the promotion of the highest interests of humanity, who through the very delicate nobleness of his spiritual, and the fine-spun texture of his physical nature, has neither the power of enforcing his own due su-

premacý, nor, were he possessed of such, the will to use it.

Many a time, when reading the lives of those men of genius whose names must live on the roll of fame so long as the world itself endures,—and who, as a general rule, have been as much distinguished by their sufferings as by their talents—do I recollect to have thrown down the volume in an agony of passionate indignation, and burst forth into a torrent of vehement accusations against their persecutors,—accusations which even a sense of their impotence failed at first to restrain.

Such, for instance, were the excited feelings with which I read of the immortal Dante,—banished from his country, and pursued from city to city by misfortune,—of the gentle Tasso, persecuted almost to madness, imprisoned, calumniated, and at length, worn out by the effects of all this cruel treatment, dying at the very moment when the tardy laurel was about to wreath his brow,—of Domenichino, done to death by jealous malevo-

lence,—of the glorious Mozart, in whom the very genius of divine harmony seemed embodied almost from his birth, obliged to submit to a thousand indignities at the hands of the mean-spirited and tyrannical ecclesiastical prince, who knew not that the possession of such a subject was the brightest jewel in his crown.

Excepting however when thus strongly excited under some such peculiar influences, I appeared, I believe, like my brother, an amiable and docile child.

But I was yet untried. The atmosphere of love surrounded me, my wishes were gratified, my thoughts uncontrolled; and my nature leading me to find my own happiness in promoting that of others, and in the cultivation of refined and intellectual tastes, the better parts of my character were drawn to the surface; and the deep source of ill—the total want of any fixed principle in religion and morals—was unthought of and unfelt either by myself or others. I acted purely upon impulse, and, circumstanced so fortunately

as I happened hitherto to have been, it was but natural that the impulses to which I was exposed should generally have been in a right direction.

## CHAPTER VIII.

At length the morning arrived on which we were for the first time to leave our happy home ; and, forgetting for the moment all our joyous anticipations, with tears and sobs we took leave of our mother and little Agnes.

It would be vain for me now to attempt any description of the places through which we passed upon our route, or even of the impressions which they left upon my mind. Other and far different recollections throng around, and press upon, and stifle me ; and I feel that the momentary and mournful relief which I have found in dwelling on my childish years, ere entering upon the torturing remembrances of my seared and blasted youth, is about to pass away from me for ever. One little

incident—I know not why—occurs to me with peculiar vividness, and as it exemplifies my own and my brother's imaginative temperament, I shall here mention it.

It had been arranged by my father that our way should lie through Egra, as Alfred and I felt a strong desire to visit the scene of Wallenstein's death, the circumstances of which had just been freshly imprinted upon our minds by Schiller's graphic pen. Upon our arrival there we found that the house in which the tragical event had taken place, and which is now, as then, inhabited by the burgomaster of the town, was freely exhibited to strangers. Soon after this had been told us, Alfred, looking very serious, said, "Papa, is it not kind in the burgomaster to let travellers see his house at all times? How troublesome the family must find it! But do you think he would let me go into the fatal room alone, and in the night-time? I should so much like to be there alone in the dark."

"In the dark, my dear! why do you wish that?"

“Because, papa, then I should see Wallenstein.”

“See Wallenstein ! how so, my dear ?”

“Why, papa, if I were to go whilst the glaring sunlight was shining into the room, with a number of people around me, and an old woman standing by my side, and rhyming over her stupid story, like the one who teased us so the day we went to the castle at Heidelberg, I should only see you all, and a room like any other room, and a bed like any other bed ; but I could not see Wallenstein, and hear his noble voice, and the clash of swords, and look upon it all as Schiller did : I am quite sure that before Schiller wrote the death of his hero, he visited that room alone and by night.”

“But, my child,” said my father smiling, “if you went quite in the dark, you could not observe the staircase by which the murderers entered, nor the position of the bed, nor the window, or door, or anything in short ; you might just as well shut your eyes here and fancy it all.”

“Then,” said the boy thoughtfully, “I think

it would be better to have just a very small flickering light, placed in a corner ; one might imagine it to be Wallenstein's night-lamp."

"Well, dear, since you so much wish it, if the burgomaster has no objection, all shall be arranged as you like."

"Thank you, thank you, papa ! And will not you come too, Marie ?" he added, glancing towards me with a sweet smile : "I should not care to go without you !"

The proposition delighted me ; for the same idea had occurred to myself, although, my more advanced age rendering me sensible to the ridicule it might excite, I had refrained from mentioning it. No objection was raised to our scheme by the good-natured burgomaster and his family ; and accordingly that evening, hand in hand, with throbbing hearts and stealthy steps, we hurried to our mysterious rendezvous.

The door of the house was opened by an invisible hand, and by a faint light we were guided to the staircase ; no person appeared, no sound

was heard, as we noiselessly glided along, without stop or hesitation, till we found ourselves in the room which we felt to be that we sought. The door closed behind us, and we were alone !

Our first glance was at each other—our next, a fearful and quickly withdrawn one towards the bed. The curtains were closed, and by the almost dying glimmer of a solitary night-lamp, which hung in the centre of the room, we distinguished a sword and helmet thrown carelessly, as if by the hero's own hand, upon a chair beside the couch. Breathlessly, in silence, we waited—how long I know not—with what emotions, what visions, I shall not attempt to describe : until my father, wearied, and rendered uneasy by our protracted absence, at length opened the door, and entering found us clasped in each other's arms, sobbing, and excited to a degree which rendered him seriously alarmed for the result.

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[The narrative of the unfortunate Marie was here, as she tells us, interrupted by a severe and

nearly fatal illness. Upon resuming her pen, apparently before health was completely re-established, the recollections of the critical period of her early life, which commenced during her stay at Dresden, seem to have been so intense and painful as almost to have overturned her reason. Her narrative at this place becomes a mere tissue of wild and incoherent allusions to the lost happiness of her former life, the misery of the present, and the hopelessness of the future.

The translator therefore finds it necessary, in order to preserve the thread of the narrative, to insert here some extracts taken from a Diary kept by Marie during her absence from home. In doing so, he means to confine himself strictly to such passages as bear directly upon her story. A fresh and youthful spirit breathes throughout the whole; and in following the writer through the dreary waste of her after existence, memory has often wandered back to this smiling oasis for relief.]

## CHAPTER IX.

Pirna—Saxon Switzerland, October 31, 18—.

YESTERDAY I experienced, and from one and the same object, both disappointment and pleasure, and each of these in a high degree; but, strange to say, the disappointment—contrary to what sage moralists teach us to expect here below as to the order of their precedence and their relative duration—took the lead and was the least lasting! and by the way it seems to me that these same moralists are very much given to maligning this little world of ours, and that in more ways than one. Now for my part I am determined to see it with my own eyes, and trust to my own experience; and till this latter greatly change, I shall, in spite of all their melancholy views, call

this earthly home of ours a happy, bright, and lovely place.

But to return to the subject of my disappointment and my pleasure, which these lofty speculations threaten to drive out of my head. Of the Saxon Switzerland I know not that I had formed to myself any very definite idea; but judging from my impressions of it at first sight, it seems to me that a more inappropriate title, or one more calculated to give rise to false expectations, could hardly have been devised, calling forth, as it does, visions of Nature in her grandest forms of concentrated sublimity. The traveller, as he approaches with his mind full of pictures of gigantic mountains enveloped in eternal snows, of stupendous cataracts and boundless glaciers glancing coldly to the sun, is destined to a sad revulsion of feeling on coming at length upon a set of fantastically formed rocks, and hills of a very moderate size, in some places rising abruptly from the plain, and in others gently undulating and richly clothed in wood, with the Elbe wending its muddy way

around their base. In short, the first glance gave rise in our case, as I suppose it must in every one's, to feelings of intense and unmingled disappointment. By degrees however, as the unhappy designation became disentangled in our minds from the objects it is so ill-suited to characterize, we began to admire the fanciful variety of shape and colouring which Nature has here flung carelessly around, and to feel a singular charm in the unique beauty of the scene. Some snow has fallen last night for the first time this season, and we have thus had the pleasure of surveying the landscape this morning under a new and, I should think, a peculiarly advantageous aspect. However this may be, it was at least the means of suggesting to Alfred just now, as he stood on the top of the Bastei, the whimsical idea that he who first misnamed this fantastic region must have been influenced by some shadowy recollections of the snowy ranges of the Alps seen in miniature through the wrong end of his telescope. \*    \*

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Tomorrow we proceed to Dresden, where we hope to find Barbara. In less than twelve hours I shall have pressed a sister in my arms ! Does she long to know us as we to know her ? Surely it must be so ; yet how strange it is that she should never have written to me ! I have so often longed to write to her, and been restrained only by the thought that, as she was so much older than I, it was her part to begin a correspondence ; whilst my doing so might appear obtrusive. Had I been Barbara, I think I should have made an effort to become acquainted with my younger sister. But she thinks of me, no doubt, as of a child ; this, I am sure, must be the reason of her silence. When she sees that I am almost a woman, she will be surprised, and perhaps sorry that she had not loved me sooner. Yet why should I suppose poor Barbara does not love me merely because she does not write, when I, who have neither written to her nor seen her, can already love her so dearly ? I will no longer indulge in a suspicion so painful to myself and unjust towards

her. Besides she may have written much of Alfred and me to my father. Yet no, this can hardly be, or surely he would have told me of it. How very strange it all appears!—but tomorrow I shall see her—she will see us all, and then at last will learn to love us.

Dresden, November 1st.

Today disappointment has come to us again, in a more definite form, and of a kind far more difficult to bear than our last; but pleasure, and that too of a deeper character, will soon, I hope, follow.

Alfred and I, as we entered the city this forenoon, could scarcely enjoy its beauty—for beautiful it is—so entirely were we preoccupied by thoughts of our sister. On reaching the hotel we listened with breathless eagerness for the answer to my father's inquiries after those whom we so anxiously hoped to meet.

“Madame \* \* \* has not yet arrived,” said our host, “though apartments were engaged for her upwards of a week since.”

A letter was in waiting for my father, to say that a slight indisposition, joined to the dislike she felt to remain longer than necessary in the city, had decided my grandmother not to leave home until near the time we should be returning to Baden.

All this was a great sorrow to us. Our hearts had been fixed on having Barbara with us here ; it would have added so much to our enjoyment that she should have seen everything along with us ! My spirits were so completely damped, that when my father and Alfred proposed an immediate visit to the picture-gallery we have so long desired to see, I could not bring myself to accompany them. But, truth to tell, I am afraid I was a little out of humour as well as grieved, and that it was not merely the disappointment of not finding Barbara here upon our arrival which depressed me, but also that I was hurt at not hearing from herself ; nay, there was not even a message in the letter, which my father read aloud,—not a single expression of regret at the delay.

Can she indeed be so indifferent to us ? Oh

no, I cannot, will not believe it ! there must be some other reason ; she does not know how much we love and long for her. I wonder if she urged grandmamma to come at once ? Oh, how I would, if in her place, have prayed and entreated that there should be no delay. To me every hour would have seemed a week, and every week a year. But perhaps Barbara does feel as I do ; perhaps she has entreated in vain ; or it may be that, less selfish than I, she has unhesitatingly given up her own wishes rather than oppose those of one whom she must look on as a mother. Yet why not say this ? How is it that she does not feel that this apparent indifference may wound us ? It would have been so easy for her to write one line—but one line ! \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

November 3rd.

At length I have visited the Gallery. Oh that I might dip my pen in the beams of yon glorious autumnal sunset, ere I write the name of the “Madonna di San Sisto !” I feel as if every

attempt to describe this sublime work, or my own emotions as I looked upon it, must be utterly vain and fruitless. It threw me into a sort of ecstasy; and as I gazed, spell-bound, upon those heavenly eyes, it seemed to me as though I too were raised aloft, and floating with her far beyond earth and all sublunary things. Yet was it not mere beauty of form or feature which thus enchanted me; of these I thought not; and perhaps, so far as they alone are concerned, it might be possible to meet with models even more excellent in the eyes of many. It was an expression of the softest feminine purity, grace, meekness, and withal of dignity—the evidence of an intellect at once sublimely contemplative and intensely penetrating—the perfect and harmonious blending of the woman and the mother, with a higher nature, an angelic essence—and more, far more than my poor pen can describe, which shed over the whole a surpassing loveliness—a softened yet transcendent glory, whose enchantment created around me a very paradise of delight.

November 28th.

In compliance with my father's desire, Alfred and I, on our visits to the Gallery, sometimes restrain our first impulse, and pause before the works of Correggio, Murillo, Titian, &c., in all of which I find myself feeling an ever-increasing interest; but we never return home without feasting our eyes upon our prime favourite, who still exercises over us in the midst of all an unrivalled and quite peculiar sway. I now begin to observe (what during my first visit I scarcely saw) the minor details, of which this exquisite composition is made up. Amongst these however I must not reckon the infant Christ, which I now think no-wise inferior in grandeur of conception to the Madonna herself. The subject is surely one of even greater difficulty, as it might be supposed almost impossible to reconcile the sublime character of divinity with the soft and yielding gracefulness of infancy—the form and features of the human child, with the glorious expression of the incarnate God. These to us appear incom-

patibilities in the contemplation of which our weak imaginations falter and are lost. Yet all this has the immortal Raphael achieved—and more; for in the deep and mournful glance, full of half-upbraiding yet long-suffering meaning, which the Holy Child casts forth upon a world of sin and sorrow, one already sees the germ of that feeling which afterwards led the Saviour-Mediator to pronounce the words as He hung upon the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !”

Beneath, with upturned and admiring gaze, appear two cherubs, the very perfection of childish loveliness, and yet so entirely dissimilar from Him who excites their wonder and adoration, that the attention has scarce been attracted towards them, when it pauses in new bewilderment at the mighty genius which has thus, as it were, in the same moment embodied two conceptions of heavenly beauty in the infant form, at once so entirely different and yet so exquisitely harmonious. \*

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March 30th.

At last my grandmother has named a definite time for her arrival. On the day after tomorrow we are to expect her and Barbara; and as we do not leave Dresden until the second week in May, we shall still have a month to show our sister whatever is to be seen here; and perhaps, after all, it may prove that our disappointment has not been without its advantages, as our own experience will now enable us at once to introduce her to all that is best worth notice. How much I shall enjoy watching her countenance as the glories of the Madonna burst upon her for the first time!

April 1st.

It is over! the long-desired meeting has taken place,—I have seen my sister. Can it—Oh can it be that I have such an one? At length all is explained—would that it had for ever remained a mystery! Dear father, well might you sigh, well might you look sorrowful! Barbara my sister—Alfred's sister! Can it indeed be so? Was it for such a moment, as that which revealed

her to my sight, that I have longed so earnestly? How I shrank and shuddered in her embrace! The words of welcome, ready to greet a dear and loving sister, died away upon my lips; and so complete and terrible was the revulsion which took place within me, that unable to endure it I was escaping from the room, when my eye met Alfred's, and its expression and the excessive paleness of his countenance alarmed me and arrested my flight. For a moment I almost thought he would have fainted; but as I approached him, by a violent effort he recovered himself.

Dear, dear brother! I could myself endure all that I feel to be before us,—but to see you thus tried!

[This portion of the Journal is much blotted, as if with tears.]

April 5th.

I still feel as one in a painful dream, struggling to awake, but alas! struggling in vain. For the first time in our lives have Alfred and I shed bitter tears together over a real sorrow,—a sorrow

from which we see no escape, to which there can be no end.      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

I now begin to feel that, in order fully to enjoy works of art, it is necessary to have a heart at ease and a mind tolerably free from care. These are no longer ours—will they ever be again? Everything seems changed. If whilst standing before one of our favourite pictures I for a moment forget that I have a sister, how quickly am I reminded of it by that sharp darting sensation which almost deprives one of breath, as some dreaded, painful thought suddenly recurs to the memory; and forthwith the image of Barbara takes the place of the beautiful creation of the artist.

April 6th.

This morning, immediately after breakfast, my father told Alfred and me to prepare for a walk, and I saw by his countenance that he was about to speak to us upon the subject at present uppermost in all our minds. It was evidently very painful to him to do so; and we had proceeded some distance, before, with an apparently strong effort and

a voice in which deep emotion was expressed, he thus began.

“It must often have appeared extraordinary to you, my dear children, and even unnatural, that I should have hitherto spoken so little to you of Barbara. I could not fail to perceive your surprise that I should not have participated more warmly in the affectionate feelings with which you were prepared to welcome one whose intimate relationship ought to have rendered her dear to us all, and who, from the fact of her long-continued absence, seemed entitled to a double portion of our interest and regard. What formerly appeared incomprehensible to you is now, no doubt, explained.”

He paused for a few moments, and as we did not speak, he continued:—

“Sometimes within the last few days I have felt a doubt as to the wisdom of the course I pursued in allowing your young imaginations spontaneously to form conceptions of a kind to heighten the disappointment which has unex-

pectedly fallen upon you. If I have erred in this, it was with a good intention. I did not feel myself at liberty in any way to prejudice your minds against your sister, by representing her to you as she appeared to me on my visit to ———. Besides, I was not without hope that her feelings might have been softened by the death of her grandfather, who loved her most sincerely, and ever treated her with unvarying kindness; whilst in the three years which have elapsed since I had seen her, I thought her mind might have opened and improved. In both these expectations I have been deceived. Barbara appears to me now, in all respects, the same as when I first saw her. She has not even, I find, made an effort at self-improvement, by pursuing a light course of study which I laid down for her at that time, and to which I have since repeatedly by letters recalled her attention. But however disheartened and distressed by all this, I do not yet despair. Barbara has had few advantages; she has been the spoiled darling of an old couple, kind-hearted and amiable

in the extreme, but of very limited refinement and cultivation; and her other companions have been confined to persons of an inferior grade, whose only aim has been to flatter her self-love. Thus, being accustomed always to consider her own wishes, and to be made a first object with all around her, she has naturally become self-occupied and lamentably inattentive to the feelings of others. Let us hope that, when placed in an atmosphere more conducive to the healthful growth of the affections, and in a situation where she will have an opportunity of witnessing the happiness—the only pure happiness, as you well know, my dear children—of loving and living for others rather than ourselves—her character may undergo a complete change and become in all respects such as we would have it. Meanwhile we must bear with her, and always remember that if she is to be won to love, it must be by love on our part,—if she is to learn self-control and self-forgetfulness, it can only be by perceiving the happiness which flows from these sources. Alfred,

Marie, my beloved children, will you promise to do all in your power to produce these happy results?"

"I will, I do promise, dearest father!" said Alfred.

"I will endeavour to do what you wish," was my more undecided answer; for although determined to do my utmost towards the fulfilment of his desires, I felt doubtful as to my own strength, and did not dare to utter a positive promise which I felt I might be unable to fulfil.

April 28th.

How strange and incomprehensible to myself is my present state of feeling! When apart from my sister, my father's words recur with all the force of truth to my mind, and again and again do I resolve to act according to their intent. But once more in Barbara's presence, and especially when perceiving its effect upon Alfred, I forget all, and find my spirit rising and my temper almost breaking bounds at each fresh instance of her inordinate vanity and extreme selfishness. How painful it is to feel thus—I who would love everything!

Whence come these bitter, angry feelings—to-wards a sister too? Ah, that is worse than all: were she not my sister, I think I could far better endure it. Yet why not endure what, after all, must be borne, calmly and as I ought? How nobly my father bears and forbears, yet how suffering he sometimes looks! And grandmamma, how simple and goodnatured she is! Notwithstanding the amiability I know her to possess, I often expect to see her angry at the inconceivable impertinence of Barbara's manner—the more disgraceful as it is offered to one singularly kind and gentle, and who has besides been as a mother to her through life. My blood often boils as I look on, whilst the good old lady only smiles, and lets the offence pass without a word of rebuke.

May 5th.

Barbara has now been with us a month; can it indeed be but one short month? To me it seems a year, an age. I have lost my interest so much in everything, that I have not of late felt disposed to write. This evening I will strive to do

so ; perhaps in the effort I may be able in some degree to rid myself of feelings now lying like lead upon my spirits. Yet how express them ? they are so new, so terrible ! It seems to me as if my mind had been with harsh and sudden movement transported into some gloomy region, hitherto unknown, where, bewildered by strange sights and sounds and influences, it vainly struggles to regain the home of peace and love which something tells me it has lost for ever.

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How strongly have I been sometimes attracted towards mere strangers, and felt at once that I could love them ; I knew not—asked not—why. Now I have learnt to know another feeling, and Oh what a hateful one ! Yet surely this cannot be—I cannot hate my sister. No, no, I have not so quickly reached that odious point ; that were not possible. My father told me I should love her, cherish her, bear with her. As to the two last—yes, I admit their obligation, and will, if I can, obey ; but to *love* ! Is love then matter of choice ?

or, granting that it were so, ought we indeed choose to love that which in its very nature is unloveable? Do not virtue, truth and goodness form the only firm and legitimate basis upon which to ground our love? Without these, can we—should we—give affection? It is not, I feel (and upon this point I have examined myself strictly)—it is not Barbara's face and person being unattractive and ungraceful in the extreme; it is not her manner, wanting in everything that one desires to see in woman; it is not the coarse loud voice, the disagreeable accent, or anything merely external which thus affects me; it is a something inward which I know not how to define, which even were she beautiful as an angel would, I am persuaded, force me to shrink from her. I do not know whether this may arise from any intrinsically bad qualities, or whether it may not be simply the absence of good ones, together with the total want of appreciation for everything I love. The good, the beautiful, the true, are ideas of which she has not the most

distant conception ; nay, they are subjects of ridicule to her, enjoyed and indulged in directly in proportion to the pain which she perceives it inflicts upon us. Dear Alfred suffers even more than I, and I feel that he must long continue to do so : he is more delicately organized, more sensitive to external influences than myself. Her vulgar impertinence and coarseness make him tremble and turn pale, and quail before her. I do not think it is in his nature to hate, but he can never be happy in the constant presence of one unloved. I see him shudder as she enters the room, and, like myself, he seldom speaks before her. The topics which have ever made our usual conversation with my father, cannot be mentioned before one whose presence is an antidote to every pleasing sentiment.

May 7th.

Tomorrow we leave Dresden. Oh, with what different feelings from those with which we entered it ! How changed is everything ! Even that to which I looked forward with delight, but one short

month ago, has now become a source of torture. Alfred and I have hitherto avoided going to the picture-gallery or other public places with Barbara; indeed she has preferred sauntering about the town, and loitering in shops, to visiting any of our favourite haunts; but today, when we wished to bid adieu to the Madonna—which we leave as a beloved friend, with whom for months we had lived in daily and delightful converse—Barbara proposed to accompany us, partly, I believe, in order to show off a new and gaudy dress, but principally, I fancied, because she knew full well that we did not desire to have her as a companion. Hearing her express this intention, anger and vexation got the better of all my good resolutions, and I sat down gloomily, declaring that for my part I should not go; but at that moment my father's eye met mine; I remembered all he had spoken, and without uttering another word prepared to set out.

Barbara walked through the gallery after her usual manner in public, staring at every one, and

making silly observations in so loud a voice as to attract universal attention and occasion a smile wherever she appeared. She leaned upon Alfred's arm, as I did upon my father's; and before we had been five minutes in the rooms, the face of my poor brother was dyed a deeper crimson than it had ever worn before. I heard him say to her, in a low tone, "O Barbara, pray do not speak so loud, every one is looking at us!"

"I do not care for being looked at, I am not ashamed to be seen," she answered unblushingly in a conceited tone, and with a glance round the room, which called forth another only half-suppressed laugh.

I heard my father sigh, and thought I read upon his countenance an expression of shame and distress which I had never seen before. Meanwhile we had reached the Madonna, and the soul-piercing glance of those heavenly eyes produced upon me its usual magical effect,—how soon, alas! to be dispelled.

"Is that dull, dingy-looking thing the beauti-

ful Madonna of which you talk so much?" was uttered sneeringly in my ear.

I could not speak, anger would have choked me had I attempted it, but I darted upon her a look in which all I felt was plainly written. Tears sprang to Alfred's eyes, but by a violent effort he restrained them, and we turned away. And thus we parted from our idol!

Since we came home, hardly a word has been spoken, except by Barbara; she has talked of the dresses of the people she saw, and with still greater interest of her own, making sundry allusions to the effect of her striking appearance; and she has besides shown more of the "eldest sister" in her manner to me than before—I suppose in retaliation for the contemptuous look which I gave her in the gallery. I bore this patiently, if the silence of scorn and disgust deserve the name of patience. I fear it was but a poor and forced endurance.

Now—in my room—alone and sorrowful, all angry feeling is subdued. The joyous anticipa-

tions with which I first entered these walls—the remembrance of the tender love with which I longed to embrace a sister, and which gave itself unasked to one unknown—all return upon me with a softening influence; and the desire to love and make my sister happy seems absolutely necessary to my own peace. Here, father, I renew my promise, and say once more, and from the depths of my heart, “I will endeavour to fulfil your wishes.”

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[This is the last entry in Marie’s Journal. Up to the period of the arrival of her sister she had been in the habit of writing in it almost daily, and in a manner which indicated a lively interest in everything noticeable which came under her observation. It would appear however, afterwards, as if the presence of one so painfully uncongenial to her ardent and poetic temperament had oppressed her spirits, and made her indifferent to passing events.

The account she has given from memory, in the

narrative to which we now return, of the unhappy state of her feelings towards her sister, both at the time of her arrival and afterwards, proves how lamentably she had failed in her efforts to fulfil her father's wish.]

## CHAPTER X.

UPON our return home we found my mother and little Agnes perfectly well ; the latter grown a lovely creature eight months old. Already golden curls peeped from beneath her cap, and her countenance displayed all the intelligence we had been led to expect. In the first ecstasy of receiving my mother's embrace, and in witnessing the half shy, half playful glances of the sweet child, I almost forgot that everything was not still as it had been before. Alfred and I had so many things to see, and old associations thronged so happily into our hearts, that for some days we had scarcely a moment to dwell upon anything disagreeable. We forgot Barbara in her absence, and even her presence failed to weigh us down

as it had done upon the journey and at Dresden. The birds sweetly welcomed us with their song ; the swan seemed to rear its head with a more graceful sweep than ever, as it swam towards the crumbs we threw to it ; the willow had shot out fresh branches, and the flowers already perfumed our Paradise with all its wonted summer sweetness.

“Surely all this cannot change,” said Alfred, as he threw himself upon the seat about a fortnight after our return, whilst an expression of exquisite enjoyment diffused itself over his delicate features. But what in this world is unchangeable ?

We now recommenced our former course of life, and my father strove earnestly to find some subject of interest for Barbara, which might arouse in her a desire for improvement—but in vain ; she complained of the dulness of the place, and formed acquaintances in the village amongst persons of a lower station than ourselves, who thought they were honoured in knowing my father’s daughter, although they cared not for herself individually.

This gave her parents serious uneasiness, but she heeded no expostulations. At home, she said, she had always been accustomed to companions, and she had no idea of spending the day in a house where there was nothing spoken of but stupid books, and where the very canaries were thought of more consequence than herself.

To Alfred and me the disposition of her time in the manner just alluded to was infinitely agreeable. Each day proved to us more and more strongly that Barbara's habits and tastes were too firmly fixed to be influenced by us ; and after having made a few abortive efforts to interest her in our pursuits, we resigned the task as hopeless.

“ I feel that it is not right, Marie,” said Alfred one day, “ and yet I cannot help rejoicing that, being such as she is, Barbara declines reading with us, and prefers other society to that of her own family. Oh that she were different !—that she could indeed enjoy with us all that we love and prize ! It is so strange, so unnatural,

to have a *sister* whom we cannot either love or admire. I at least must ever feel it thus; for," added he, looking at me with inexpressible affection, "that word and my own Marie had become so connected in my thoughts and heart, that it seems to me almost impossible to give the same loved name to one so different from you in all things as Barbara."

We now recommenced our studies more vigorously than ever; and, encouraged by my father, I made full use of his permission to read freely whatever chanced to fall in my way. The insatiable thirst after knowledge of every kind which had characterized my early years only increased as it was indulged; and each fresh discovery introduced me to new fields of inquiry, and laid open new springs of thought. Thanks to our pleasing and exciting occupations, Alfred and I found our time pass henceforward with much less unhappiness than we had anticipated. Indeed my brother often said to me, that, although our home was not what it had been before Barbara's

arrival, still he thought we had in fancy exaggerated the evils of that event ; and that should her taste for the society which she met in the village, in preference to that of her own home, continue, we should not have any right to complain.

At the end of two years the oft-postponed period of Eugene's return was at length definitely fixed, and the idea of meeting him once more after so long a separation occupied all our thoughts.

He came—a tall, handsome, elegant-looking youth—but still our own Eugene ; his fine mind developed, as well by intercourse with men of distinguished attainments, as by a steady perseverance in a judicious and extensive course of study. Although already celebrated for poetic talent, and admired and encouraged by those whose opinion was most valuable, he was with all this unspoiled. Flattery and applause seemed to have fallen powerless upon one whose heart was protected by early and deep affections, and whose mind, however conscious it might be of power in comparison

with many others, was yet more sensibly aware of its inability to fulfil its own conceptions.

The family of the Count von Ehrenstein had been known and distinguished for generations, and therefore Eugene's youthful efforts in poetry and painting became at once "the fashion." Every one desired to see him, and once seen he was not likely to be forgotten or neglected. He returned to us the idol of the Viennese ladies, distinguished by the notice of the Emperor, and gratified, as any youth of his age must have been, by success; but, as I have said, in nowise injured or altered in heart.

His manner was more finished and elegant, but not less unpretending and unaffected, than before, and his tastes were equally simple. He told us stories of what he had seen and heard supplementary to his previous correspondence, for pen and paper could not by any means have sufficed to give a description of all that had presented itself to his observing eye. He had made sketches without number, both of places and persons, and

always apparently with reference to our gratification; thus in the most artless manner letting us see that we had never been absent from his thoughts—that all his hopes for the future, as well as all his happiest reminiscences, were connected with what he, as well as we ourselves, had always considered “Paradise.”

## CHAPTER XI.

It had so happened that, on each of the first two days after his return, Eugene had only an hour to remain with us, and he did not then see Barbara. Alfred and I had of course mentioned to him in our letters the joyous expectation of finding our sister at Dresden, and I had afterwards simply told him of her arrival, without comment of any kind. I could not bring myself to speak of my bitter disappointment, still less could I affect to find a happiness in my new relationship which had no existence in my heart.

Eugene was thus entirely ignorant of the change which had passed over our home ; and as the day of his arrival drew near, and I read the overflowing expressions of affection with which those of

pleasure mingled, at the prospect of finding a new friend in Barbara, my spirit sank at the thought of having to present to him as my sister one whose character and demeanour rendered her only an object of ridicule to those uninterested in her, and of shame and sorrow to all with whom she was connected.

As he entered the room where Alfred and I sat alone, on the third morning after his arrival, his countenance evinced more than its usual expression of mirthful humour; and seeing that something had occurred to amuse him, I expected to hear him recount some little incident with all his characteristic comic talent.

“Marie,” he said, laughing, “who was the strange being, still more strangely apparelled, whom I met going out of your gate just now? I do not recollect ever to have seen anything like her either here or elsewhere.”

I was silent. He looked surprised at my gravity, and turning to my brother said, “Can you tell me, Alfred, who this mysterious personage

may be, the very mention of whom has banished the smile from Marie's lip, and the rose from her cheek? Why you too look grave," he continued, glancing from one to the other with surprise; "what can be the matter with you both? You do not know whom I mean; for to think of her and to be grave at one and the same time is, I should say, nearly impossible. And yet, poor creature, it is not at her person that I laugh—for that she is not accountable—it is only at her extraordinary choice of colours, and—of looks! she gave me one so irresistibly bewitching as I passed"—

"Cease, dear Eugene," I exclaimed, almost gasping; and with a desperate effort I added, "she is my sister!"

He started, and every trace of mirth vanished from his countenance as he repeated, "Your sister!"

"Yes, my sister, Eugene; I meant to have spoken of her to you today."

He looked at me for a moment with an ex-

pression in which doubt struggled with sympathy and sorrow ; then seizing my hand, he imprinted upon it an ardent kiss, and saying in a low voice " Forgive me," hastily disappeared.

The next day Eugene came as usual, and joined us in our favourite retreat, but said not a word of Barbara. He had brought with him a volume of Shakespear, with the intention of reading to us an admirable translation of Hamlet ; and we sat down, expecting a great enjoyment, as our young friend read like a true poet, entering into the spirit of each part and character with a truth and delicacy which showed how entirely he could appreciate the genius of the immortal author. He had just commenced the splendid passage where Hamlet seems to hold converse with the tempting spirit of self-destruction, when a rustling amongst the boughs arrested our attention. We looked up, and Barbara appeared ! Had the ghost of Hamlet's father itself stood before us, we could not have been more instantaneously and thoroughly petrified ; for, deterred by the nature

of our pursuits, she had never before penetrated to this sanctuary.

“Barbara!” I exclaimed involuntarily.

“Well, Fraulein Marie! I suppose you think no one has any right to pleasant company but yourself. I need not have wondered so much at your fondness for the willow-tree—and books!” and she laughed sarcastically.

The blood flew to Eugene’s cheeks, and his eye glanced proudly on the intruder, as, subduing my indignation, I only replied by calmly pronouncing our companion’s name.

“Oh, the Count Eugene von Ehrenstein! I met you on the road yesterday, but I suppose you did not know who I was.”

“No, indeed I did not,” replied Eugene with a very peculiar emphasis, intelligible enough to us, though not to her.

“Well, I suppose you will not have any objection to read for me as well as for Marie,” she said, with a look intended to be very fascinating, but which seemed to call forth a feeling of disgust

almost too strong for control in him for whom it was intended.

“ Shall I go on ? ” he said, turning to me.

My first impulse was to answer in the negative, but remembering my father’s desire to excite or awaken if possible some taste for better things in Barbara, I restrained it, and begged of him to continue. He did so, but the charm was broken ; the tone of his voice was altered ; the *abandon* with which he had given himself up to the spirit of his subject was gone. To us it seemed as if the very genius of Shakespear himself had evaporated, and left nought behind but empty and unmeaning words. For the first time in our lives it became a relief when Eugene’s voice ceased ; for the first time we longed to leave our Paradise.

As we rose to go away, Barbara said, looking round, “ This is a very nice place, I think I shall come here often. My father wants me to read, but reading to one’s self is such a stupid thing ! I would rather hear you.” And she cast another meaning glance at Eugene, who vainly strove to

conceal his increasing aversion, and hastily took his leave.

For a considerable time past, as I have already endeavoured to show, our home had been sadly changed; but it was on this day more particularly, as I now feel, that the heavy chain which has so long lacerated my wretched soul became inextricably closed around me.

## CHAPTER XII.

HENCEFORTH Barbara took her place as regularly as we did ourselves under the willow when the weather permitted, and in the room appointed for study withindoors when it rained. Nor was this all; after a few days she commenced a practice of setting out every morning, about the time Eugene might be upon the road, to meet and accompany him in his walk. He bore this quietly for some time, but at last told us that he could no longer join us at any given hour. He did not mention the reason, but this we could only too easily divine, even without the clue afforded us by observing that he constantly varied his modes of approach; now taking short cuts, now circuits, in

order to avoid that which he evidently felt to be an intolerable trial of his patience.

This line of conduct on his part seemed greatly to incense Barbara, and she began to manifest an increased irritability and even violence of temper, which broke out upon all occasions, towards Alfred and myself especially, but not unfrequently to the servants and little Agnes also. Her bitterest rancour was evidently against myself; but as my spirit was one not capable of tame endurance, she soon found that in contests with me she was always the greater sufferer. She became passionate, spoke in a loud voice, and made use of coarse expressions; whilst I, on the contrary, ever retained an apparently smiling calmness. I could not have answered in her own language, for it was one perfectly new to me, and such as my lips could not have been brought to utter under any circumstances; but whilst outwardly cool, my blood boiled, and a deep concentrated dislike, ever increasing, and perhaps too little restrained,

vented itself in biting sarcasms, which would once have seemed foreign to my nature, but which I was now quite unable to control.

But let me hasten over this painful subject. Years of bitter remorse and humiliation have quenched the spirit of aversion, amounting sometimes almost to loathing, with which I at that time contemplated my sister's selfishness towards all, and her especial cruelty towards my beloved brother. Feeling as I now do, were it not inconsistent with the necessary course of my narrative, I would cease to dwell upon her faults. Yes, I would much rather let the entire guilt fall without palliation on my own head, and thus leave no inlet for mercy towards myself, even in the heart of the most compassionate, than seek to render odious the being whom . . . . . Ah! not yet—not yet—need I utter those terrible words! \*

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Seeing that she could not succeed in vexing me, Barbara now turned her full spleen against Alfred, through whom she knew I could be made

to suffer far more than by anything done to myself individually. She tormented the gentle boy in every way that malice and low cunning could devise; she threw out insinuations which were not sufficiently marked to be repelled, and which yet made the colour mount to his cheek, and caused him to writhe under his father's interrogatory glances. She resolutely kept her place amongst us, and almost entirely gave up her favourite friends in the village, in order that she might the more effectually annoy us, and enjoy moreover the pleasure of seeing Eugene, whose appearance, notwithstanding the difference in their ages and the utter incompatibility of their natures, had inspired her with a strong sentiment of admiration.

One day, a few hours after a scene more painful than any which had yet taken place between Barbara and me, I was sitting in the saloon with my mother and Alfred when Eugene entered. His countenance was more than usually grave, and there was a restless agitation in his manner

which he vainly strove to overcome by speaking upon indifferent subjects.

Having waited for some time, and finding that there was no probability of our being left alone, he came close to me, and bending down, as if to look at the drawing to which I had been putting a few finishing touches, he said in a low and tremulous voice, "Marie, may I see you alone? there is something of which I wish particularly to speak with you."

With a fluttering heart I arose, and saying I would walk with him in a few minutes, I escaped to my room, there to endeavour to calm the emotion excited by his words.

I do not think I had ever actually said to myself that I was one day to be Eugene's bride; but unconsciously I had learnt to love him, and in every undefined prospect of the future he bore a part.

As he spoke, the gravity of his manner, and the passionate though subdued tenderness expressed in his voice and eye, had at once revealed to me

all that filled his soul ; and overpowered by those thrilling, half painful, half delicious hopes and fears which throng into the young heart when a love which has long lain within it, latent and unacknowledged, suddenly awakens into full life and irresistibly asserts its dominion, I threw open the window and leaned forwards to catch the passing breeze.

My eye wandered over the lovely scene which lay stretched out before me, bathed in the brilliant summer sunshine. Every spot was familiar ; all animated by some fond and tender childish recollection ; and as these, one by one, arose before me, the spirits of the past and future, mingling, hovered over me ; their low sweet voices chaunted forth blessings, and their mild influences, penetrating to my inmost feelings, softly stilled their tumult, and shed over me a sense of holy and exquisite peace.

“Eugene,” I murmured, “I am thine ! Alfred, my loved brother, you are ours—we shall be happy !—Oh, how happy !” At this moment

my eye was suddenly arrested. The figure of Barbara, emerging into view, passed slowly along the path, which skirted the river's bank.

Why did my heart stand still and sicken at the sight? Why did my limbs tremble—not now with love and hope—but with fear, dark and indefinable, but not for this the less terrible? Why did I press my hands upon my eyes, as if to hide for ever the vision which appeared before me at this moment, like an omen of death?

*Why?* say I *now*? Spirits of the past and future, did I hear ye aright? Did ye indeed mock me with your blessings? or was it my fond imagination that deceived me? Did I but fancy a hymn of blessing in the funeral wail ye murmured o'er me? Alas! alas!   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

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A gentle knock at the door, and Eugene's voice, asking if I were ready to accompany him, aroused me from this trance-like state; and not daring to cast another glance upon the scene without, chilled in heart and sorrowful, I prepared to rejoin him.

“How sad you look, dear Marie,” he said tenderly and half reproachfully, as I took his arm. Reason had already begun to assert her rights; and ashamed of the folly of giving way to vague fears and gloomy forebodings, apparently so puerile and imaginary, I tried to smile, and looking up encountered a glance so full of love, so ardent and impassioned, that my eye fell beneath it, and every other thought and feeling was lost in tumultuous emotion.

It was some time before Eugene spoke. Then, in a voice almost inaudible, he said, “Marie! need I now say, I love you? In childhood and in youth you have been to me as a star of promise. You must have seen—you must know this; but the time is now come when for my own, for all our sakes, I must speak. We are as yet very young—many would perhaps say too young to know our own hearts; but I know mine—have known it long—too well! Marie, beloved Marie, speak to me!”

I was unable to answer in words, but involun-

tarily the hand which he had grasped returned the pressure of his own. One rapid glance was interchanged between us, and he was satisfied.

After a little time Eugene became somewhat more composed, and continued : “ I know that many will accuse me of following the dictates of a headstrong passion, in thus seeking to involve you at so early, and it might seem premature an age, in obligations which only death ought to terminate. In part I plead guilty to the charge. I do love you, Marie, with an ardour which can ill brook silence and uncertainty. I have hitherto lived upon hope, but this alone can no longer suffice. Since my return—since I have found in the companion of my childhood all, far more than my most sanguine anticipations led me to expect—I have felt that suspense was no longer endurable, and again and again I have longed to throw myself at your feet, and implore you to give me your heart ; or, if this were impossible, to send me far from you at once, and for ever ! But you do not cast me from you—you accept my love,”

he exclaimed, pressing my hand to his bosom and gazing into my face with an expression of intense rapture.

Ah Eugene ! was this hour of bliss indeed our own, or is it but a dream of which I write ?

“ When I asked you to speak to me, dearest Marie,” Eugene proceeded presently, “ it was with the intention of giving you reasons for my conduct sufficient, as it seemed to me, fully to justify it, and prove that I have not been influenced by any purely selfish motive. I would now fain forget these ; I would not have any painful associations mingle with my present happiness. Neither, feeling as I now do, could my lips utter a thought derogatory of one who calls you sister. But you do not, you will not require further explanation, dearest ! Wherefore seek for cold and prudential reasons for pursuing that which, loving and trusting each other as we do, seems to be the only natural course. Why longer feign indifference ? Why not at once assume in the eyes of all a position which must place us beyond the reach of

the humiliating annoyances from which we daily suffer? May I then entreat your father's consent to our immediate betrothal? Dear, dear Marie, say that I may!"

I could not summon words for a reply; none indeed were needed, for he had read my heart; and now, talking of the future—the bright, hopeful future—we pursued our way along all our most favourite, because the least-frequented paths.

As Eugene was anticipating with all the fervid poetry of his nature the delight we should find in visiting other lands, and enjoying together, and as if through the medium of one soul, the rich beauties of nature, art, and literature which they contain, I interposed, "But, dear Eugene, I trust that wherever we may hereafter go, my father will permit Alfred to accompany us; you must never ask us to separate; I could not be happy, even by your side, apart from him."

A slight shadow passed over Eugene's open brow, but it quickly disappeared, and he said smiling, "Marie, I believe it would not be pos-

sible to conceive a greater proof of the intensity of my love than that of its having the power to render me even momentarily jealous of one so dear to me as Alfred—I cannot help fearing that I shall never have the first place in your heart.”

“Eugene, I cannot hear you speak thus,” I replied; “each of you must let me love the other without jealousy. But surely you could not like to think that Alfred should be left to the tender mercies of such a one as Barbara? Our father has ever been a devotedly affectionate parent, but he does not know all that goes on here, and his own nature is so good and gentle that it is difficult to make him understand that any one can be unamiable and unkind. My mother is necessarily much engrossed by household cares; and, so that we have a good appetite, and neither colds nor other ailments, she takes for granted that we are quite well, and sees no reason why we should not also be quite happy. Barbara restrains herself in their presence from everything except cunning inuendoes, of which my father only under-

stands enough to puzzle him, and Alfred enough to make him miserable. How then could I leave him?"

"You could not, and you ought not," said Eugene; "and believe me, dearest, Alfred's happiness shall ever be precious to me as my own."

By this time we had reached the cross-road leading to our own house, and I saw my father coming towards us.

"I must leave you now," I said, in answer to his look of inquiry; "and you will find me some time hence under the willow."

He left me and joined my father, whilst I turned into the cottage of a poor woman by the way-side, whose sick child I had promised to visit this day. I strove to amuse the little creature as usual, but my mind wandered in spite of every effort, and the stories of enchantment, fairies and genii, which were generally at my command in the greatest profusion, all vanished at the touch of the powerful magician whose influence was at this moment paramount in my breast.

It was rather a relief to me to hear the village-clock announce that an hour had sped away, and thus having fulfilled, however unsatisfactorily, my promise to my little friend, I was at liberty to rejoin Eugene. I had scarce put aside a branch of our favourite tree, when he caught me in his arms. "My own!" he cried—and never had I seen so glorious an expression on his countenance. Love and youth and hope beamed there, and gave to it a character of inspiration as he clasped me to his bosom and said, "He consents, Marie! on this day fortnight we—." A slight noise alarmed us, and turning round we beheld Barbara!—rage and malice appeared upon her countenance. She looked at us for a moment and disappeared. "She is gone to tell your father of my delinquency," said Eugene, laughing, whilst he pressed me closer to him: "yesterday it might have been of some little consequence, but today I defy her, and all the world too."

When we met at dinner the same afternoon my father kissed me tenderly, and Alfred welcomed

Eugene and me with his own sweet and peculiar smile. My mother's eyes glistened, for she had been reminded of her youthful home, and the day of her own betrothal. Barbara's countenance alone was sullen and malignant, for her tale had met with a different reception and solution from what she had anticipated, and she appeared to wish to seem unconscious of our presence. For our parts, we were too happy to heed hers.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE next fortnight glided away almost imperceptibly, and at length the day arrived upon which the whole neighbourhood were to assemble to bear witness to the vows hitherto spoken only in secret.

As I entered the breakfast-room at the usual hour in the morning, my father pressed his lips to my forehead, and whispered a blessing; my mother stopped in the midst of sundry orders to a servant, to give me her affectionate greeting; and Alfred kissed me with silent but deep emotion. Barbara alone proffered no kindly wish; and as I saw that her eyes were swollen with weeping, and that she looked as if she had not slept, for the first time I pitied her. The contrast between my

own position and hers forcibly struck me : I saw her misused (if one may say so) by Nature ; utterly devoid of every charm and grace which woman loves to call her own,—a stranger to the hearts of her own family,—an object of dislike or ridicule to all besides ; whilst I, beloved and accounted beautiful, had been accustomed from my earliest childhood to see every face brighten as I approached : an idol in my home, I was now about to become the bride of the man admired above all others by my unhappy sister.

I thought over all this ; I forgot under the softening effect of happiness that no such contrast, except as an injustice, was felt by her ; that in her own eyes she was fair, and all—perhaps more—than I appeared to be in those of others. Yes, I can truly say that from my heart I pitied her, and once more (alas ! how often had similar resolutions been forgotten) determined that I would strive for the future to pursue a line of conduct more conciliatory and suitable to our relative positions.

I remembered having often heard my father express his firm belief that there was not any human being, however degraded, upon whom a uniform course of kind treatment might not in time produce a softening effect, and work changes almost miraculous. Conscience told me that I had never steadily tried such influence with regard to Barbara, although I had often desired to do so. "But I will forthwith," I said inwardly, rising from table, whilst my heart swelled with that delightful sensation which conquest over self always inspires.

I followed Barbara out of the saloon, and had glided after her into her room before she had time to perceive or to prevent me. When she at length became aware of my presence, she grew red with passion, re-opened the door wide and pointed significantly towards it, but did not speak. I quietly closed it, and not taking further notice of me, she began to busy herself at the glass in arranging her hair.

"Barbara," I said. She made no answer. I

went over to her side and gently placed my hand upon her arm.

“Barbara,” I began,—and although she shook me off with an angry movement I continued,—“let this day which gives me a bridegroom give me also a sister.”

She made no answer, and I went on. “I have never told you how dearly I loved you before we had yet met. Hear it now: Alfred and I loved you, longed for you, more than I can express—more than you perhaps could now believe—when you were still unknown to us. Why did you close your heart against your brother and sister from the first? Why would you not love us, and let us love you as we wished?”

I paused for breath, and looking earnestly into her face thought I could discern there a slight expression of softened feeling.

Struggling with my own agitation, and hoping to improve the moment, I said again, “Barbara, I feel that this is a turning-point in both our lives, and upon you it depends how we shall

stand towards each other in future. I confess that I have done wrong; I have not sufficiently considered your feelings and the differences in our education; forgive me—say you will try to love me, and I will do the same by you.”

“What! the beautiful Marie, the angel of goodness, the country’s pride, ask for my love!” she cried, with a bitter sneer; and with a passionate gesture flinging away the arm with which I had almost unconsciously encircled her, she vehemently added, “and pray for what am I to give it? Is it because my younger sister has deprived me of the affection of father, mother and brother, and has caused me to be slighted by all who should be my friends? or is it because she has won the heart of the man I love, and calls him today her bridegroom, who but for her wiles might have been my own?”

Under other circumstances I might perhaps have been tempted to smile at these words, and the bearing which accompanied them; but the feeling which had led me in the first instance to

follow her still predominated, and in the same earnest spirit I pursued my efforts at reconciliation.

“I am not so much in fault as you suppose, Barbara,” I said; “inasmuch as I may have erred, I am ready to acknowledge the error, and endeavour for the future to make reparation. Let the past be forgotten. Once more then, Barbara, I ask—are we to be friends and sisters?”

“Never, never. *You* my friend and sister! Serpent—sorceress—I detest you!” and with a countenance distorted by passion she pushed me towards the door.

“It is well, Barbara,” I said slowly, and with a calmness which surprised myself; “the decision is made, and remember, it is *yours*.”

Strange and inconsistent as it may appear, I left my sister's room relieved rather than vexed by her obduracy. In acting as I had done, I had obeyed an impulse of pity born of my own happiness; but even whilst urging a reconciliation, and I believe at the moment heartily desiring it,

I dreaded the results of its being realized, persuaded as I was that any true and lasting harmony between characters so entirely dissimilar must be perfectly unattainable.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE guests began to arrive before I had had time to recover from the effects of the scene which I have just described; but in the midst of warm congratulations and good wishes, I soon forgot the very existence of Barbara, and Eugene and I became bride and bridegroom\*.

My father had invited all his poorer neighbours, and prepared for them a plentiful repast upon tables laid out in the garden, at the same time that the richer guests were feasted withindoors.

Little Agnes flitted about, now here, now

\* It may be necessary to apprise the English reader, that after betrothal, a ceremony generally conducted in Germany with much more pomp and publicity than that of marriage, the parties bear the names of "bride and bridegroom."

there, the very perfection of infantine beauty, and divided the attention of the company with ourselves. She greatly resembled what Alfred had been at the same age; she had the same golden ringlets floating over an exquisitely fair neck, the deep azure eye, set as it were in liquid light, the same transparent and ever-varying complexion, but more vivacity. Alfred had at times, even as a child, an expression of extreme humour, and as a boy he showed a quick perception of the ludicrous. He could in some moods be excited to merriment by the merest trifle, but the cast of his countenance was habitually serious. He was easily depressed, and had never what could be called high animal spirits. Agnes, on the contrary, was bright and buoyant; full of life and health and beauty, she really looked like a thing "fresh from fairyland."

She was now three years old, and, from having been brought up exclusively amongst elder persons, remarkably forward in mind, without being in the smallest degree what is termed old-fashion-

ed. She was consequently the pet and darling, not only of her own home, but of the whole neighbourhood,—with one exception. Next to Alfred and myself, this sweet child seemed to be the principal object of Barbara's dislike; and so conscious did she seem to be of the feeling, that a cloud always overspread her open brow when her elder sister appeared; and stealing to my side, as if for protection, she would frequently whisper, "Marie must not leave poor Agnes alone with *her*," laying an emphasis on the last word, and looking furtively in the dreaded direction.

On this festal day Barbara did not appear, although my father had gone himself to seek her; but I believe her absence was felt to be a relief by all parties. She sat in her room, but not alone. As I left my chamber, prepared for a walk with Eugene and Alfred, the door of Barbara's room was opened by a servant, who happened at that moment to be passing out, and I saw the daughter of the postmistress sitting apparently in very earnest conversation with my sister.

Delighted to escape from the crowd, we rambled over hill and dale, sitting down upon the green sward under the shade of a tree when fatigued, and talking, as young people often do, of the past and the future, rather than of the present.

My father had strongly advised Eugene to travel during the ensuing two years, as until the expiration of that period he would not permit us to marry. Eugene was just at an age to derive benefit from visiting foreign countries, and his guardian conceived that the amusement and change would prevent his feeling too deeply the separation from me. It had therefore been decided that he should go to England, France, Italy, and perhaps to Greece.

Eugene seemed to suffer much ere he could bring himself to consent to this arrangement, but he felt that he ought not to dispute the wishes of his best friend. In writing to me a faithful account of all he should see, and in noting down particular places which we might hope to visit

together at some future day, he promised himself the chief alleviation of absence.

Engrossed by these subjects, so interesting to ourselves, we thought not of our guests until the lengthening shadows warned us that the hour had passed when we ought to have been at home to take our places in the dance. We returned with all speed, and found the company wondering at our absence, but by no means disposed to be severe upon a little lack of ceremony in the hero and heroine of the day. The dance now commenced, and it was not until very late that all had departed and left us to repose, wearied by the excitement we had undergone.

I had almost forgotten to mention one little incident which took place during the day. As I stood half-concealed in a window, some time after the ceremony of our betrothal, I heard a lady say to a gentleman with whom she was conversing, "Is Fraulein Marie Count von Arnheim's eldest daughter, or has he another married?"

"She is not the eldest," was the reply, "there

is another ; fortunately she is not present to-day."

"Why so?"

"Because as one of the family she demands some share of attention, and to bestow it upon her is almost impossible."

"How can that be? surely the sister of Marie cannot be unattractive?"

"Unattractive is a poor and unmeaning word as applied to her," returned the gentleman; "and yet as to features, Fraulein Barbara is not so plain as to be very remarkable. For my own part I have seen persons of much more decided ugliness embellished into absolute beauty by an expression of intellectual and moral superiority; but never have I met with one whose appearance influenced me so painfully, or towards whom I felt so insurmountable a repugnance."

"How strange!" answered the lady; "can Marie's sister be indeed such as you describe?"

"Strange it is," replied her companion, "but not the less true. Yet were you to ask me why I

am repelled by Fraulein Barbara von Arnheim, I believe I could scarcely tell you ; even as I might find it difficult to explain precisely why I am attracted in an equal degree by her sister. It is not merely for her personal grace and beauty that we all love Marie ; the tenderness she inspires is but a reflection of that which dwells within her own breast. She is loved because she loves ; whilst Barbara is loathed, and her presence felt as an evil influence, not alone for her ugliness, nor yet for the frequent malignity of her expression, but because one feels instinctively that in her entire being there does not exist one spark of that holy spirit of love which pervades Marie's nature, and lights up her countenance with the immortal and changeless beauty of the heart."

Almost sinking into the earth with shame at this too true picture of my sister—shame unmitigated by any sense of pleasure at the opposite and flattering remarks made on myself—I was inexpressibly relieved when, by the removal of the speakers to another part of the room, I was

enabled to escape from my humiliating position unobserved.

It had been arranged that the Countess von Ehrenstein should pass the period of her son's absence at Vienna ; Eugene was therefore to take her there, and then to set out for England.

During the remainder of his time at home he was constantly with us ; all study was given up, for so many old haunts had to be visited, and so much had to be said, that there was no leisure left for books ; and as we were usually very diligent, my father made no objection upon the present occasion to a few weeks of holiday.

Barbara avoided us as much as possible ; but when we met at table, or in passing through the house, or by chance on the road, a malicious smile crossed her face, or a taunting expression was uttered by her, and sometimes with the effect of ruffling for a moment the happy course of our thoughts and feelings. She had renewed her walks to the village, and her intimacy with her old acquaintances there ; and although this dis-

pleased my father, it was to us, as before, a great relief.

As the time of Eugene's departure approached, we observed that he became very much out of spirits. On the evening before he left us, as we sat upon a sofa apart from the rest, he said, "Marie, I do not know why I feel so cast down. Two years will, I know, soon pass over; yet latterly it has appeared to me, whenever I think of it, as an immense abyss which may swallow up all my dearest hopes and wishes. I cannot understand it. My nature is hopeful—I am not used to dream of ill. Loving and trusting you entirely, why do I feel thus? Is it, my beloved, the shadow of some frightful evil hovering over us which thus affects me? or can it be that it is only the inevitable pain of parting, vaguely projected into the future, and magnified by my, for once, ill-boding imagination?"

"Think not of it, dearest Eugene," I answered; "what should we fear? we are young, we love each other, and are without enemies."

“Without enemies!” said he, “ah no! we have an enemy; and this is what haunts me.”

“Fear her not, Eugene, we are beyond her power; she cannot, dare not harm us.”

“I must fear her,” he replied; “there is a depth of malice in her glance at times which makes me tremble when I think that I am to leave you near her. I feel strongly, in spite of my better reason, that she may in some way injure us, although I know not how.”

“Never, dearest Eugene, never! With our knowledge of her character, are we not forearmed against every attempt to do us ill?”

“I hope so,” he answered sadly; “but forgive me, my own love, for tormenting you with these melancholy forebodings, which I ought myself rather to endeavour to overcome and forget.”

I tried to cheer him, and spoke hopefully of the future.

“Marie,” he said, “you do not know how I feel; I have always been aware that your love for me was subordinate to a stronger feeling; you

would not, I believe, forsake me for another lover, but your affection for Alfred has scarcely left room in your heart for the return of a passion ardent and devoted as mine, and which is rendered apprehensive by its very devotedness."

"Again, Eugene!" said I, interrupting him; "I thought we were to have no more upon that subject."

He smiled mournfully, shook his head, and remained thoughtful and silent. Conscious of the depth of my love for Eugene, I was grieved and wounded by this groundless charge of coldness; yet, upon reflection, it appeared to me far from unnatural that a passing emotion sufficient to occasion it should have arisen in his impetuous nature. My affection for Alfred had been the predominant feeling of my life; this fragile and sensitive being had from the moment of his birth twined himself around every chord and fibre of my heart. He hung upon and clung to me, as though I were necessary to his very existence; and even at the exciting period to which I have

been alluding, I believe that for him I could willingly have sacrificed every consideration of my own personal happiness.

## CHAPTER XV.

FOR the first three months after Eugene's departure his letters arrived regularly on the appointed days. He had been detained at Vienna by the illness of his mother, who caught cold upon the journey; and it soon appeared that her constitution, weakened by long delicacy and sorrow, was giving way. Her son watched by her side with all the tenderness of a woman, and wrote at first with anxious fears, and afterwards with hopeless sorrow as to the result. Within three months after they left us, she was laid in the family vault beside her husband, and Eugene, overwhelmed with grief, was for a time silent.

His first letter, after that in which the melancholy event was announced, spoke of his intention

to start immediately for England, and a subsequent one bore the Dresden postmark, from which town he was speedily to proceed to Hamburgh and so by sea to London. Henceforth he desired us to direct to him under cover to a friend of his late father's in England, whose address he enclosed.

We now watched impatiently for news of his arrival, but none came; day after day and week after week passed without bringing tidings of the wanderer, and all the letters which we sent to him remained unanswered.

We obtained newspapers bearing dates corresponding to those on which we supposed he might have sailed, thinking that the mention of some fatality at sea might perhaps throw light upon the mystery; but nothing of the sort appeared. A horrible suspicion that Eugene might have been murdered in some remote situation, and all trace of the deed lost for ever, occurred to me frequently; but I strove to overcome it, and hoped on day by day, until even the youthful hope of seventeen became well nigh exhausted.

One day as I was walking along the road, and meditating upon Eugene's strange and incomprehensible silence, a sudden turn brought me face to face with the daughter of the postmistress. I stopped to speak to her, as I had always been in the habit of doing, and I was surprised to see that she blushed, and hesitated, and stammered, so as almost to prevent her being able to answer some simple inquiry I made after her family. Pitying her embarrassment, which I attributed to her intimacy with Barbara and to her feeling conscious that it could scarcely be approved of by us, I did not detain her, and passed on. Before I reached home however, the girl's extraordinary discomposure and the subject of my previous reflections had, by no unnatural process, become closely connected in my mind, and I hastened to my father's study.

"Father," I said eagerly, "I have discovered the mystery."

"What mystery?" he asked.

"That of Eugene's silence. Barbara and her

friend the postmistress's daughter are the cause of it."

"What can you mean, Marie?"

"They have stopped his letters—I am sure of it;" and I told him of my meeting with the girl, and of her strange embarrassment.

He looked aghast, and exclaimed, "How can you harbour such a suspicion, Marie—of your sister too?"

"I could imagine the worst of Barbara; she would do anything to gratify her own bad feelings."

"O Marie, I am ashamed of you! I will not listen to this," he replied; "I was wrong to do so for a moment. Never let me hear a word of this kind again from your lips."

"Father," I said beseechingly, "does it not seem more likely that Barbara should have done this, than that Eugene should have forgotten us?"

"Neither seems probable to me," rejoined my father; "if Eugene lives, and still loves you, we shall some time hear of him; till then let us not

debase ourselves and others by unworthy suspicions."

This was an instance of a singular peculiarity in my father's character, which may have already attracted the reader's notice. He never would take for granted aught but good in others; and where individual traits of the reverse showed themselves undeniably, he believed only because he saw, and exactly what he saw—no more. That which to any one else would have appeared but a natural conclusion drawn from observation by common sense, he shrank from as an unwarrantable suspicion, which he would have been criminal in allowing himself to form. Thus although he had seen in Barbara instances of a selfish, vain and vindictive spirit, yet as my suggestion was unaccompanied by any direct proof, he would not listen to or regard it.

As I was leaving the room he called me back, saying, "Marie, I can make every allowance for your feelings, tried as they have been of late, but I could not forgive your ever alluding in future to

this subject to any one ; promise me that even to Alfred you will not mention it.”

“ O father ! do let me tell him, he suffers so much ; and this would be such a relief to him,” I said imploringly.

“ He has no right to such relief ; I cannot allow it ; give me your promise, Marie.”

With a heavy heart I promised ; but although forbidden to impart to my brother the comfort I possessed myself, I was now able to speak less mournfully upon the subject ; and perhaps, without any intentional swerving from my promise, there may now and then have been something in my words which guided his thoughts in the right direction ; for his spirits improved, and he did not brood over the fate of his friend so gloomily as before.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ABOUT this time my parents began to see more of the neighbouring gentry than had been formerly their habit. In this their object was, I think, to divert my own and Alfred's thoughts from dwelling too much upon the melancholy subject of our friend's disappearance; and they were besides anxious to overcome an extreme reserve in my brother's manner toward strangers, which my father knew might prove troublesome to him if he should ever be forced into contact with the world. We did not however often leave our own home. My father had during his boyish residence in England acquired a taste for the cheerful and social evening meal customary in that country, in preference to the

more substantial one usual in his own; and as this was always accompanied by intelligent conversation, and followed by music, of which we were all passionately fond, we had almost every night a few guests.

Amongst others we had a frequent visitor in the young Baron von Sternberg, a nobleman whose property lay within a few miles of our own. He had been educated in France, and had recently returned, a showy, volatile, heartless man of the world. He had paid me marked attention, but of course without receiving any encouragement, for several months before my betrothal; and he had often, after the celebration of that event, been a source of merriment to Eugene, who well knew how little cause for jealousy he had in such a rival.

My public acceptance of another suitor at once put a stop to his disagreeable attentions; but shortly after it became generally known that Eugene had disappeared, they were renewed with an audacity which surprised and displeased me.

No coldness on my part seemed to daunt him ; and it was rather a relief to me when he one day demanded a private interview, and thus gave me an opportunity of at once, and decidedly, declining his addresses. He left no argument untouched by which he might hope to shake my fidelity to my lost lover, and did not even hesitate to asperse the noble character in which I felt, and told him I could never cease to feel, unshaken and entire faith.

He then tried, with cold and inhuman unconcern, to convince me of the probability of Eugene's death ; and while horror at the bare idea froze my blood and deprived me of the power of speech, he went on to repeat tale after tale of travellers who had disappeared in like manner, the mystery of whose dreadful fate had either never been cleared up, or had only been penetrated after the lapse of years.

My silence, I believe, led him into the misapprehension that he was making some impression, and had even a fair chance of success ; until at

length, being worked up to the highest pitch of indignation, and every other feeling giving way, I arose, exclaiming, "Baron von Sternberg! had I never been the bride of the Count von Ehrenstein, never would I have been yours." And so I left the room.

Piqued by my conduct—for he was incapable of any deeper emotion—he henceforth assumed an air of disdain in my presence, and commenced a series of attentions to a pretty, artless young girl, the heiress to a large estate, who was on a visit in our neighbourhood.

Scarcely had one short month elapsed after my rejection of his addresses, when we were all present at the betrothal of this innocent child—she was but fifteen—with the man whom, though so utterly unworthy, she trusted and adored with all the fervour of youth's first love.

I could with difficulty restrain my tears, as I looked at the soft eyes of the youthful bride, as she turned them on her bridegroom with an expression which, had there been a heart in his

bosom, must have fixed and bound it to her for ever. Shortly afterwards they were married, and at the end of a few months, during the course of which time an expression of care and deep sorrow had gradually spread itself over the fair face of the young wife, a carriage with closed blinds passed our gates, in which—wretched, hopeless and forsaken—she was borne to her father's house.

Her worthless husband, secure of her wealth and tired of her presence, had disappeared the day before, taking with him the wife of a gentleman in the neighbourhood; whilst for her whom he thus basely abandoned was left a letter, couched in terms of the coldest and most heartless politeness, in which he recommended her to return at once to the home of her childhood and forget him, as he would never see her more.

Poor girl! the year of her marriage had scarcely elapsed ere she slept in the tomb of her fathers, her broken heart at rest for ever.

But to resume my own story. About a month

after my formal refusal of the Baron's addresses, I was greatly distressed one morning at missing the ring which had been the pledge between Eugene and myself of our betrothed faith. I remembered having given it to Agnes to play with on the preceding evening, as I had frequently done before; and being much engaged with a book, I had not observed that she did not return it to me. Upon questioning her next day, she could only tell that she had been rolling it upon the table, when Alfred called her to look at some pictures, and she forgot all about it.

The house was searched, the servants were examined, but in vain; the ring was lost, and no light ever thrown upon its mysterious disappearance.

## CHAPTER XVII.

I FEEL it to be necessary to the object I have in view, in giving this history to the world, to make some allusion here to the condition of my own mind, with respect to religion and morality, at the period of which I am now treating. Perhaps by the one word *confusion* this state may be better explained to the reader than by whole pages of description.

I had read, though in a desultory and superficial manner, many of the most celebrated systems of so-called philosophical theology, now leaning to one, now to another, but upon the whole feeling most attracted by that of Spinoza.

There was in the sublime conception of a universal soul, co-extensive with and pervading all

things, that which pleased my fancy and charmed my imagination ; whilst in the plausible simplicity of this one grand mystery my understanding found a rest and refuge from the manifold and, as I then weakly thought, embarrassing minutiae of all the more accredited religious faiths. It seemed to me as if nothing could so tend to promote love and harmony on earth as this belief, that one all-penetrating essence actuated all. It was a universal brothership, if I may use the expression, and must, I falsely fancied, effectually protect those who adopted it from every evil and selfish feeling. Vain fool ! I had yet to learn the impotence of mere philosophical fancies in controlling an ill-regulated mind and self-directed will.

As our characters developed, it became apparent that, although in many things we resembled each other, there were strong points of difference between my brother and myself. He already showed a disposition similar to that of our father : he had the same simplicity, and the same innate sense of truth and goodness. Where I reasoned

and moralized, he felt and meekly believed. Thus, although a precisely similar course of education was pursued with regard to us both, entirely different results were produced. He delighted in metaphysical speculation equally with myself, but with him it took a somewhat different direction. Thus whilst I rejoiced in giving full scope to every faculty of my mind, and from the earliest period of my life entered boldly and rashly upon subjects of the deepest import—even such as have puzzled the matured intellect of man in all ages—his thoughts took a more limited range, and were connected chiefly with the affections and their development. He would, for example, talk with me untiringly of the mysterious sympathies which exist between ourselves and our fellow-creatures, of the instinctive perceptions of congeniality which enable some persons, without any process of reasoning or any previous knowledge, to recognize at a glance those whom they may love and trust, and from whom they may unhesitatingly look for sympathy—a sixth sense, as it were, granted to

those whom a delicate organization, unsuspecting confidence, and utter want of worldly wisdom, render liable to become a prey to the numerous class in whose eyes sensibility is weakness, and ignorance of the world matter for contempt. He could in short dwell for ever upon all the mysteries of that most mysterious of all things, the heart of man, and find there subjects of profound contemplation; but, equally timid by nature as I was fearless, he shrank from the venturous discussions into which I would sometimes have led him.

The origin and permission of evil, and similar mysteries, he thought it vain and injurious to attempt to treat metaphysically. "Why brood over such things, dear Marie?" he would say, "seeing it is so obvious that we can never in this world understand them. Is it not sufficient for us to know that, if there be a God (and who can doubt that there is?), all that He does must be right and just. You frighten me sometimes with your theories, and indeed I wish you would not

read so many of those learned books, which, so far from being of use to you, seem only calculated to confound one's notions of good and evil."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Our minds were however soon destined to be recalled from such speculations as those I have just been alluding to; and all power of enjoyment, whether in study or in our ordinary recreations, was taken from us by the increasing miseries of our home.

So long as our spirits drooped beneath the weight of anxiety for Eugene, Barbara left us in comparative quiet, and seemed satisfied, without using any special endeavour to annoy us; but no sooner did she perceive that we had in some degree recovered from our anxiety, and were once more able to wear the semblance of happiness, than she recommenced her former system of annoyance, and seemed to have laid out a plan for

tormenting us still more ingeniously malicious than any she had hitherto pursued.

Even the illness and death of my grandmother, which took place about this time, failed to awaken her to any better state of feeling; nor, although the kind-hearted old lady's last thoughts were bestowed upon this ungrateful object of her long and unwearied affection, did my sister manifest any sign of sorrow at her loss.

Once more her unwelcome presence was resolutely imposed upon Alfred and myself at all hours and in all places. Her half-uttered insinuations against us both, but especially against him, became more frequent than ever; and though before me she was kept under some control, she never allowed even a momentary absence on my part to pass without distressing my poor brother either by petty malice or violent abuse.

The consequences were soon apparent. The gentle, loving boy became peevish and irritable, and his finely strung nervous system being untuned, he sometimes even gave way to passion,

and his health visibly declined. Once he was so much provoked, that for the first time he made a complaint to his father. "But never, never will I speak to him again on the same subject," said he afterwards to me; "nothing shall tempt me to do so, however great the provocation I may receive. I thought as I looked into my father's face that it seemed changed, that he had grown thin and pale; he groaned so heavily and looked so sorrowfully, and I fancied even reproachfully, as he answered, 'Do you think, Alfred, that you alone suffer?' O Marie, if you had heard the depth of anguish in his voice as he uttered these words! I could not speak; I could only kiss his hand and hasten away, ashamed of having selfishly pained with my own sorrow one already so depressed. No, never shall he hear a word of similar complaint from me again."

"But he shall from me!" I exclaimed passionately: "What right has Barbara to poison the happiness of a whole family? She shall be sent away, and that instantly." And unheeding

Alfred's efforts to detain me, with all the impetuosity of my nature, I flew to seek my father.

"Father," I said, "we cannot live any longer in the house with Barbara—she will kill Alfred! she is a wicked creature, and does not deserve to be amongst us."

He looked at me with astonishment. "Is that *my* Marie?" he said seriously.

"I do not know what I am, father," I replied hurriedly; "it makes me almost mad to see Alfred so wretched, and you too—every one. We were so happy before she came. Oh send her away, and let us be again as we were."

"Send her away, Marie! never; she is my child, as you are; I owe her the same duty, and I am conscious of having badly fulfilled it. We have all erred alike in this. Had we been more uniformly kind and affectionate to her since she came amongst us, all might now have been different."

I was going to speak, but he stopped me.

"No more, Marie, no more!" he said, turning

away; and, as I knew his inflexibility when he believed himself to be in the right, I felt that further remonstrance would be vain.

I returned to Alfred, whom I found leaning dejectedly out of the open window of the saloon.

As I entered he was sighing deeply; he did not at first perceive me, and I heard the half-uttered words, "It must be—leave them all—father, mother, Agnes, Marie, dear Marie!" and he covered his face with his hands, whilst large tears trickled through his fingers and watered the rosebuds which clustered luxuriantly within the open window-frame.

"What do you say about leaving us, Alfred?" I said.

He raised his head mournfully: "I am going away—I cannot stay here; I will go somewhere and offer to aid in teaching at a school. I dare say some one would give me lodging for the assistance I should be able to afford, and I might pursue my own studies also."

"And leave me, Alfred?"

“I should leave you if I stay, for I should die. You do not know what I suffer. Sometimes I think of the torture invented by that tyrant, who smeared the body of his wretched victim with honey, and placed it in the sun to be stung by insects until death relieved him. It seems to me at times as if I too were receiving a sting at every pore ; for what lesser species of torment could give any idea of the venomous malignity which is daily consuming my very life ? I must go away—I have no choice.”

“If you go, Alfred, I go also ; I cannot live without you.”

“Yes, you can, dear Marie ; you must not leave our father and mother ; and darling Agnes would then have no one to protect her. You have more of the man’s spirit than myself,” he said with a sad smile ; “you are not so easily crushed, and Barbara is afraid of you.”

“You must not, you shall not go, Alfred ; say that you will not, at least for a time. Perhaps my father may speak to her, although he did not

promise ; and I will never, if I can help it, leave her alone with you."

I pleaded so hard that he gave way at length, and this terrible evil seemed for the present averted.

We never knew whether my father spoke to Barbara or not, but for some days she seemed to be more upon her guard, and did not strive with such pertinacity as usual to counteract our endeavours to avoid her.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ABOUT a fortnight after the occurrences I have just related, I had been sitting in the garden with Alfred for some time, and was returning to the house to look for a passage in a book, in reference to something we had been reading together, when I heard the piercing shrieks of little Agnes.

I flew in the direction of the sounds, which appeared to come from Barbara's room ; the door was locked. "Marie, Marie, come to me," I heard, "she will kill me ! O Barbara, stop ! I will not tell you who, but I will never say it again, if you will let me go !" cried the poor child, her screams of agony and terror mingling with the sound of blows inflicted by a rod.

“Barbara ! you wretch !” I exclaimed, “open the door instantly.”

She took no notice ; and as I heard the little voice become weaker and weaker, I grew frantic. I screamed, I stamped with fury ; until at length, yielding to my violent efforts, the bolt gave way and the door burst open.

Oh what a sight met my eye ! upon the floor lay my darling sister, stripped naked, her delicate skin covered with blisters and bleeding, and her beautiful form writhing under the blows which Barbara was still inflicting without mercy.

I took her in my arms—never had I felt such a conflict within me. Tenderness, love, and pity for the trembling little sufferer, seemed to melt my very soul, and at the same time deep abhorrence and concentrated rage threatened to arrest the torrent of my life-blood.

“Fiend !” was the only word I could utter, as I cast one glance at her distorted countenance, upon which fear now seemed to struggle with passion.

“I will cure her of turning me into ridicule!”  
I heard her mutter as I left the room.

I carried the poor child to my own bed, where she always slept, and laid her there, with closed eyes, and, from exhaustion, apparently insensible to pain.

She had not spoken after I lifted her, but it was evident, from the convulsive effort to clasp her little arms around my waist, that she was aware of her deliverance, and to whom she owed it.

I lay beside her; I felt the palpitation of her fluttering little heart, as like a frightened dove she still pressed close to me; and it seemed to me as if I only then for the first time knew how much I loved her.

Presently our old nurse came in, and listened with exclamations of horror, and almost doubting wonder, to my tale. The affectionate old woman wept and beat her breast, and seemed inconsolable, as I showed her the swollen and discoloured form of her youngest darling. I sent her to

desire one of the servants to look for my father, who had gone to visit some poor people in the village; and never can I forget his countenance as he listened to the fearful story. He buried his face in the pillow, and deep sobs broke, as it were, from his inmost soul.

My mother next came in, and Alfred—but I need not dwell upon their feelings.

What passed between my parents and Barbara at this time I never knew; she looked sullen, spent her time almost entirely with her village companions, and neither spoke much nor was much spoken to, when obliged to meet her family.

Poor Agnes was for several days confined to bed, where my mother and I watched by her side continually.

Barbara's cruelty was, as far as we could collect from the child, occasioned by the following circumstances.

Some of the servants happened to remark rather freely upon Barbara's personal appearance, both as to her looks and style of dress, a day or

two previously, when Agnes, unknown to them, was within hearing. What was said seemed to have made an impression upon the child's fancy, and next morning, peeping into the saloon where Barbara sat along with my mother, she repeated in a roguish yet half-frightened manner some of the ludicrous observations she had recently overheard; and then, seeing her sister rise with an expression of excessive anger, and move towards her, the poor child became terrified and ran screaming to her mother's side for protection.

My mother tried to appease Barbara's anger, and thought she had succeeded. But her wrath was only smouldering, as the event proved. It so happened in the afternoon, when Alfred and I were, as I have said, in the garden, the servants all out of doors, and both my father and mother absent from the house, that Agnes and her maid were alone in the saloon, when the latter, wishing to speak to one of the other servants, fixed the child carefully upon a chair at the piano-forte and left her, as she herself called it, to "make a

song." Presently something was thrown over her head, and she felt herself lifted up and carried away quickly—she at first thought by Alfred or me, and laughed without fear, until she found herself standing before Barbara in her room. Dreadfully alarmed she screamed and flew to the door. "You cannot get out, my little lady!" she said; "and now come and tell me who bid you say to me what you did this morning."

"Let me out, let me out!" cried the child: "No one bid me say it, and if they had I would not tell you."

"You shall tell me who dared to speak so impertinently of me: tell me this moment, or I will beat you with this," she said, holding up a rod, and shaking her roughly.

"You may kill me, but I will not tell you," said the child resolutely.

"We shall see," said Barbara, beginning to strip the struggling child: "Once more will you tell me?" she cried, when this operation was finished.

“Never ! but I will tell Mamma of you ; and if you beat me now, I will just say it all again, and over and over again—and you are—”

This attempted repetition of the offence excited Barbara to fury. Without waiting longer she proceeded to put her threat into execution, and the heroic little creature might have fulfilled her resolution to the letter, but for my timely intervention. She said to her nurse a few days after, whilst caressing her, “O nurse, I am so glad I did not tell her who it was I had heard say that naughty thing—for Marie says it was naughty. She would have beaten you then instead of me.”

## CHAPTER XX.

AGNES gradually recovered strength, and was soon again sporting amongst us with all her former vivacity; though her dread of Barbara seemed, as was natural, greatly increased. The sound of her voice or step startled the poor child in the midst of her most favourite plays, and sent her cowering to our side for safety.

Meanwhile Barbara seemed to have recovered entirely from all feeling of the odium which her conduct had excited. She resumed her malicious demeanour towards Alfred, and showed increasing ingenuity in her modes of torment.

One day I found Agnes sitting upon her brother's knee, and holding Eugene's dog, who was whining piteously, in her arms. Tears were fall-

ing like rain from her eyes as she said, "O Marie, look at his foot! Barbara trod upon it; and when poor Carlo howled, and could not move out of her way, she crushed him with her foot against the wall; look how his paw bleeds! he cannot walk at all." And she sobbed more than ever.

The next morning I had risen early and was sitting in my room, reading Jean Paul's touching memoir of Charlotte Corday, with my heart full of admiration for the high-minded and enthusiastic heroine, when I was interrupted by the sweet voice of my little sister. I went over and kissed her rosy cheek, which she had just raised from the pillow.

"I have been awake for some time, Marie, and I want to ask you a question I have been thinking about."

"What is it, dear?"

"Do you think there is a God, Marie?" she said mysteriously; "Mamma and nurse tell me there is."

"Most people believe that there is, dear ; but why do you ask ?"

"Because if there is a God, and if he makes everything, as Mamma says, and if he is very good, how could he have made Barbara ?" and her voice sunk to a whisper.

"I do not know, dear ; but if indeed there be a God who creates everything, He must have a reason for all that He does."

"I do not see what reason there could be for making Barbara," said the child thoughtfully.

She was silent for some moments, and then said, "Well, Marie, if there is any God, I am sure there must be two ; a good one who made Papa and Mamma, and you and Alfred, and nurse, and all the pretty flowers and birds ; and a bad one who made Barbara and all the bad people and nasty things."

"You are too young to think about this, darling," I said, "and it is time that you should rise." I called her nurse and went into the garden.

Her words had made a strange impression upon

me: that wonderful and incomprehensible mystery, the origin and permission of evil, which had baffled sages since the beginning of the world, and often almost maddened my own brain, was already presenting itself to, and perplexing, this infant mind.

“And thus it is to be ever!” I said; “we are all only children, and always children; an infant scarce four years of age has, in a moment, come to a conclusion not less plausible than those reached by the wise and learned after years of profound contemplation and laborious search.—Is there a God? and if there be, and He is good, why does *she* exist? Can the life of such a being be pleasing in His eyes? Can He desire that she should live, to destroy the moral health and life of an entire family? But if there is none, then are we either the blind instruments, or else the arbiters, of our fate.” I dare not pursue the tortuous windings through which my ill-regulated and graceless mind wandered on this momentous day; surely some demon was at hand to urge me onwards to

destruction. Before I was aware of danger or temptation, one vivid thought had flashed across my wild and darkened imagination; and by its lurid glare I saw a future for me and mine, serene and cloudless as my early years, bright and enchanting as our youthful hopes. Reader, canst thou give that thought a name? \* \* \* \*

[Here follow wild expressions of remorse for the past, of despairing anticipations for the future, and incoherent attempts at prayer. After an apparent lapse of some days, the unfortunate Marie thus resumes her narrative.]

## CHAPTER XXI.

ON the afternoon of that same fatal day I was sitting under the willow, with throbbing temples and a fevered pulse, when my brother came to me, bearing on his countenance an expression such as I had never seen there before. Wounded pride, deep and humbled feeling, anger and despair by turns struggled for the mastery, as he said, "It is all over now, Marie! I will go tomorrow; do not urge me any more; I will—I must go—I am disgraced."

"What do you mean, dearest Alfred? you cannot be disgraced."

"I am, Marie—Barbara made me mad just now; and when she placed herself mockingly between me and the door, I believe I pushed her

too roughly aside ; I saw her fall against the stove, and a smile of triumphant malice overspread her face as I escaped from the room. I met my father in passing to my own, and he asked me what was the matter. I answered ‘ Nothing ;’ but I had not been more than a few minutes there when he sent for me. Barbara was with him, her shoulder uncovered, and her face expressive of joyful triumph. ‘ Alfred !’ said my father—O Marie, his voice was so cold and severe—‘ has a son of mine raised his hand against a woman, and that woman his own sister ?’ and he pointed to a black mark on the upper part of her shoulder.

“ Now, Marie, I am sure I did not cause the mark—I did not push her hard enough for that, nor did she fall heavily enough to account for it. She must have done it herself afterwards.”

“ And did you not tell him so ?”

“ I felt it impossible to utter a word ; I am disgraced—for the first time in my life. I dare not stay ; I might do the same, or worse, again.

No, it is all over." He laid his folded arms upon the table before him and buried his face in them.

I was silent, but my thoughts were busy. Presently Alfred raised his head. "And this once was Paradise!" he said; "Paradise—lost to me for ever!"

"Not for ever," I said, throwing my arms around him; "say not for ever, my own darling brother."

"Ah, Marie, Eugene should have been here ere this, and then all would have been so different! Now"—and here an unnatural smile illuminated his pale and melancholy countenance—"now, unless Barbara marries, there is no hope for us."

There was hope, but none that I could utter; I strove to comfort him; I assisted in planning his flight; I suggested a means by which we might correspond. All was arranged for his departure the next morning very early, and we returned to the house.

I went to my room ; I felt sick and dizzy with excitement ; I started as I caught a glimpse of my face in the glass ; but my mind was made up.

“ Yes, Alfred was right, it is all over ! ” I said, as I walked rapidly to and fro. “ If there were one human being, or even a brute animal, made happier by her existence, I might hesitate—but there is not one ; her parents suffer, but they cannot love her ; her infant sister escaped destruction only by a hair’s breadth at her hand ; her brother, an angel till she crossed his path, is driven a houseless wanderer from his home. The servants and the villagers abhor her ; even the beggar becomes silent and withdraws his outstretched hand as his eye lights upon that cold unsympathising countenance, and the very dog makes a circuit to avoid her. Wherefore should she live ? The woman who rid her country of a tyrant has been called a heroine. What her country was to her—and more, oh ! ten thousand times more,—is Alfred to me. I will, I must save him ! ”

Having made this dreadful resolve, I began to consider by what means I should be able to execute it, and these too soon presented themselves. Would that I had paused even for a day, that I had not in frenzied madness rushed upon my doom ! In the midst of my fearful meditations, a long-forgotten incident of my childhood rose like a dream before me. I remembered once, when about four or five years old, as I was at play in my father's study whilst he read, I took up a bottle which lay upon the table, and succeeded with some difficulty in extracting the cork. Liking the smell, and fancying that the taste must be still better, I raised the phial with the intention of putting it to my lips, when my father's hand dashed it to the ground, and at the same moment I was pressed wildly to his bosom. "My child ! my child !" he exclaimed ; "O God, I thank thee ! That would have killed you, Marie !" And again and again he embraced me, as though I had been restored from the dead.

The bottle was strong and had not broken : it had been replenished, and often in my childish years had I read the word "Poison" written in large characters upon the label.

This with other medicines (for in extremely small quantities it was a medicine) was kept in my father's study in a chest which opened with a spring, the secret of which was known only to him and to myself.

It was already becoming dark, and I knew that in a few moments the bell would summon us to tea. I went to the study door, gently opened it, and looked in : the room was empty, and entering I quickly approached the chest, took out the bottle, and read the fatal word by which its contents were designated. I carried it to the window, and by the failing light poured several drops upon a piece of sugar. I replaced the phial, shot the spring, and glided hastily out of the room. In descending the stairs something touched my foot—I almost fell through terror, and my heart throbbed with increased violence.

It was only Carlo. "Pshaw ! already a coward !" I whispered to myself, as the dog licked my hand and fawned upon me with his usual affection.

## CHAPTER XXII.

UPON entering the saloon I found all prepared for tea, and only our own family present. A heavy cloud hung over every face save that of Barbara; there, gratified malice had lent an unnatural glow of animation; she was unusually talkative, and seemed to feel herself entitled by her late triumph to assume even more than ordinary airs of superiority.

I sat down to make the tea as usual, and with a trembling hand dropped the piece of sugar into the cup that I designed for Barbara; then giving it to my father, I requested him to pass it to her. He was reading at the time, and did not look up, or appear to have heard me, as he at once raised the cup to his lips.

“Stop !” I cried, starting forward in an agony of terror. He looked up with some surprise, and I made a strong effort to regain composure. “You take no sugar,” I stammered out in a choking voice ; “that is Barbara’s.”

“Well, dear,” he said smiling, as he passed the cup to her, “for once sugar would not have poisoned me.”

“No,” I said with an unnatural laugh, “I believe I am nervous, and very foolish.”

“You look pale and ill,” he answered tenderly, supposing that distress at Alfred’s disgrace had thus affected me.

“What a very strange taste that tea has !” exclaimed Barbara presently, after having emptied her cup at a draught.

“I do not perceive it,” said my father, “but it may be so, as much rain fell last night and the water is sometimes injured by it. But Marie, my love,” he added anxiously, “surely you are not well : what is the matter ? you change colour every moment.”

“I am not quite well—I feel a little faint—I think the room is hotter than usual; I will take a turn in front of the house.”

I rose hastily, and with trembling steps quitted the saloon.

As I opened the hall-door and stepped out, my soul became at once entranced into forgetfulness of everything by the scene which met my eye. Nature had always a peculiar power over me, and, strange as it may appear, I had never felt its sublime influence more strongly than at this terrible moment.

A flood of moonlight bathed the surrounding landscape, showing with singular distinctness in the distance the picturesque range of the mountains of the Black Forest; whilst the valley separating them from us presented an appearance which I had rarely seen before, and never in the same perfection. It was a species of mirage formed by a dense mist, which rose out of, and as it were carpetted, the ground, giving to it the character of a beautiful and extensive lake. So

perfect was the deception, that in the undulating ripple upon its magic surface one saw, or fancied one saw, distinctly the shadows of the tall poplars and waving pines which formed its boundaries. On one side lay the village as if in sleep, but the sound of joyous music floated towards us on the light and balmy breeze, and showed that happy hearts were still awake there.

For a moment my bosom swelled with that intense rapture of existence known only in the fulness of youth, as I gazed upon this exquisite scene. It was but for one moment. In the next an icy hand seemed laid upon my bounding spirit—one dreadful word seemed whispered in my ear—I started, and passed onward. Presently I heard a step behind me; I turned and saw the little Agnes, her golden ringlets fluttering in the breeze, and her cherub face turned upwards as she gazed fixedly upon the moon. She looked so sweet, so innocent, so lovely, that in a passion of tenderness I threw my arms around her. Never before had she refused my embrace;

now she struggled, broke away, and disappeared amongst the trees.

“What!” I thought, “is the brand of Cain already on my brow, or does the angel purity of infancy give instinctive warning at the approach of guilt? No, it cannot be—why should I think so? I am not a guilty one—not for myself have I done it. The title of murderess belongs not to me,” I said passionately; “Charlotte Corday was no murderess, nor am I: I have but crushed a reptile, which would have poured its venom upon the souls of all I love; and Oh how I love them!” I added, as I saw my father slowly approaching.

He stopped, and passing his arm around my waist, he gently turned me toward the moonlight: “My child!” he said softly, with a thrilling tenderness which melted my very heart.

I would have thrown myself upon his bosom—I would have died there; but something whispered, “What! pollute thy father with a murderer’s touch? Wretch, forbear!” I turned away and rushed from him, as if pursued by evil spirits.

“Am I mad?” I thought, “or was there indeed a voice?” Again it whispered, “The voice of God!” I had not gone far ere my dress was gently pulled; I started, and looking fearfully around saw Agnes by my side.

“Marie,” she said, and her childish voice had in it a tone of deep solemnity; “Marie, it was the *good* God who made all this!”

I could not speak—I hurried on.

“Sister,” she said again very gently, and I heard a low sob, “are you angry with me? Why do you not speak to your own Agnes?”

I raised the child in my arms, I pressed her in anguished tenderness to my breast, and kissed away the tears which were beginning to moisten her soft cheek.

“Agnes was only playing when she ran away from her darling Marie just now; I thought you were angry when you did not speak to me,” whispered the sweet child, as we walked on by the river side.

How long we may have continued here I know

not, when Agnes began to shiver, and begged of me to go home, as she felt very cold. She had come out with her head uncovered, and in her light evening dress; and I had not observed, in the fever of my own thoughts, that the heavy dew had already saturated her hair and dress. I turned towards the house, and had nearly reached it, when all at once a succession of piercing shrieks and a violent ringing of bells resounded through the air. To my ear it seemed as if a thousand demons were let loose: my first impulse was to fly; the second and uncontrollable one led me to the room whence the screams, now subsiding into low moans, proceeded.

I entered, and there upon her bed lay my sister—my victim! Her hair torn and disordered, her face convulsed, her limbs distorted—in all the agonies of death. By her side stood my father, striving to force some remedy between her clenched teeth, whilst my mother and nurse were rubbing her already cold and stiffening form to restore warmth.

For a moment I stood there, stunned. As I have heard that in battle men have suddenly lost a limb, or received a vital wound, without a feeling of pain or consciousness, so was it with me, while the iron entered into my soul which was to sear it for ever. I cannot—I never could—recall one thought as having occurred to me in that hour, or one sensation, save that of a sudden curdling, an icy chillness passing through my blood, and checking the fevered rush with which it had been flying through my veins for the last few hours.

“Marie,” said my father, looking up hastily, “get a bath prepared: quick—quick, or it will be too late!”

The sound of his voice seemed in some degree to loosen the spell which bound me, and mechanically I moved to obey him. I was at once calm and self-possessed; I felt—nothing! The bath was prepared, but not before Barbara was unconscious; a convulsive twitching of the muscles alone gave signs of life.

"It is too late," said my father, as he bent over her, and a tear fell from his eye. "Unfortunate girl, it must be the cholera! I did not think it had yet approached so near us. She is gasping for breath—Marie, dearest, support her!"

Quietly, coldly, I placed myself behind her, and laid her head upon my bosom; it was but for a moment, a few gasping struggles, one long spasmodic convulsion which almost raised her on her feet, and the wretched Barbara fell lifeless into the arms of her murderess!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

I HAVE little recollection of the time immediately following what I have related, and of that little nothing is clear or distinct. I never heard that doubt as to my sister's death being occasioned by cholera was expressed by any one at that time, and the panic which always accompanied the first appearance of this fearful scourge reigned in the village and throughout the country. But as day after day passed and no similar case occurred, although the disease was within twenty miles of us, the dread it had inspired gradually subsided; and the poor people, as I afterwards found out, ventured to utter whispers as to the strange providence which had sent the awful messenger into

our district but to carry off one, and that one a person despised and disliked by all.

I believe I appeared perfectly calm throughout; I knew neither sorrow, fear, nor repentance, and this absence of all emotion rendered it easy for me to act my part in such a manner as to escape all suspicion.

It was not to be supposed that my parents could feel regret at losing such a child, nor did they feign it. The servants, and especially the nurse, seemed to find some difficulty in disguising their joy. Little Agnes, childishly ignorant of any necessity for deception, danced and sung, and played with increased vivacity; she whispered to me one day, pointing to the room which had been Barbara's, "I am not afraid to go in now, Marie; there is now no one there to beat me;" then putting her mouth close to my ear she said, "I think, Marie, the good God sent Barbara away." Alfred too seemed to recover health and spirits in an inconceivably short period: about a month after the catastrophe he said to me, "How strange it was

that Barbara should have been taken away the very day I had determined to leave home ! I hope it is not wrong to feel so happy. Poor creature, she was much to be pitied—she was so unloved by every one ; and then,” he added shuddering, “she had such a dreadful death.”

“Do not talk about her any more, dear Alfred,” I said hurriedly.

“No,” he answered, “we will try to forget her. Oh if Eugene would but come home, how happy we should be now !”

*Happy!* the word sounded like a knell in my ears. To be happy, that all might become so, I was—a murderess. The end, so far as others were concerned, seemed to be accomplished ; but for myself—was I, could I ever be happy ? As yet, I was in a state resembling torpor ; my body indeed moved like an automaton, and my mind went through a daily round of mechanical duties, but my heart was dead within. Since that fatal moment when my feelings, raised to their utmost pitch by feverish excitement, had been at once

paralyzed by the sight of my writhing victim, I had known no emotion; even love for my parents, for Alfred, and for Agnes, seemed to have stagnated, and I felt as if no circumstance of life could again awaken either joy, hope, fear, or even sorrow in my bosom; but I was mistaken.

One day as I was sitting in my chamber alone, unoccupied, and in that state of gloomy inanity which had now become habitual to me, a servant came to tell me that the daughter of the post-mistress wanted to speak to me.

I sent for her, and she entered with downcast eyes and faltering step; her form had become thin and angular, and the healthful bloom upon her cheek had faded. She fell upon her knees, covering her face and sobbing bitterly.

"What is the matter, Theresa?" said I.

"O Fraulein, how shall I tell you? Forgive me, oh forgive me."

"I think I know what you have to say, Theresa; tell me the truth—that is the only reparation you can now make."

“O Fraulein Marie, I did not wish to do it—indeed I did not! but she besought and prayed me, and promised to make my fortune, and to get Wilhelm a good farm from her father when we married, and at last I consented; but I have never had a day’s peace since. I thought of the good, kind young Count, and all he must suffer; and of you, Fraulein, who were such an angel to the poor; and many a time at night, when darkness was around me, I determined to come the very next day and tell you all; but when light returned, fear of Fraulein Barbara and shame prevented me. When I heard of her awful death, I could not help thinking that it was a judgment for her sinful conduct, and I expected every day that the same would happen to myself. Oh if you knew how wretched I have been, what fearful visions have haunted me, you would think I had been sufficiently punished, and forgive me. There are the letters,” and she placed them before me. “Fraulein Barbara burned yours, and all others intended for the Count, but I never

gave into her hands any of those which were addressed to you ; I told her I always destroyed them at once ; but in truth I kept them, hoping that some day I might give them to you."

I received the packet in silence. The sight of Eugene's handwriting, the proofs of his existence and faithfulness thus afforded me, at once aroused all my torpid feelings, and restored to me the full sense of all I once had been—of all I had now become. So entirely did my own thoughts engross me, that I forgot the presence of the poor girl who lay a humble suppliant at my feet ; until, misconstruing my silence, she embraced my knees and sobbed out imploringly, " O Fraulein Marie ! you were always good, and kind, and gentle ; say you will forgive me ! do not be hard-hearted now ! you never wronged any one—you do not know what it is to lie awake during the long dark night with only the eye of God upon you—terrified by the stillness and starting at every sound—longing for light, yet when it comes afraid to meet it—shrinking from every eye, yet unable to bear soli-

tude. Oh if you could know all this, you would forgive me, and not add your anger to all my other sufferings."

"*I—I forgive you!*" I cried with a wild laugh; then recollecting myself, I added in a hurried tone, "Yes, yes, I do forgive you—only leave me—away! quick, quick, leave me!" And I almost pushed her out of the room, locked and bolted the door, and flung myself upon the bed.

"*If I could know!* Yes, at last I do know all—I am again awake, never more to rest on earth. Oh that I were dead! beloved Eugene, now you are indeed lost to me—never, never shall the arms of a murderess press you to her bosom; never shall the warm throbbings of love in your pure heart find an unworthy echo in those of guilt and remorse in mine. And I fancied myself a heroine—I thought I did well! that *I* had a right to wipe out the existence of a fellow-creature, because to *me* that existence seemed a blot upon the face of creation. I thought to give murder a new name, and hallow it. O God!

there is a God ! I would not acknowledge him in his love—I must learn to know him in his vengeance. Eugene, father, mother, brother, sister, I have lost you—all !”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

REPEATED knocks at the door, of which in the distracted state of my mind I was at first scarcely aware, at length fully aroused me, and I got up.

"Marie," said the voice of Alfred in a joyous tone, "are you asleep, or have Eugene's letters so absorbed you that you have neither eyes nor ears for any one else? It is my turn to be jealous now I think," he said laughing, as I opened the door.

"I knew it, I knew it," he cried, as his eye glanced over the table. "I saw Theresa come in and go away, and at once conjectured the cause of her visit. I have long suspected foul play in this quarter, but thought it would be wrong to mention my suspicion while it was yet without

proof. O Marie, now we shall be happy!" And he threw his arms around me. "But how is this? you have not opened the letters, and you look very ill—dearest, the surprise was too much for you."

"Yes, I was obliged to lie down; I could not see to read at first—I will try now."

With trembling hands I proceeded to open the letters: the first had been written a few days subsequent to the last which had reached us, and bore the Hamburg post-mark. Those which followed in succession expressed only surprise at not having heard; then gentle reproaches, and afterwards serious alarm. For six months Eugene seemed to have written regularly from various parts of England, and then came letters to different neighbours, begging for a line to say whether any dreadful calamity had befallen our family.

These of course had all been unanswered; and then there was one to my father, seemingly written in a state of the utmost distraction of mind,

saying that if within a week he did not receive an answer, he would set out and travel day and night until he reached us.

This was one of the letters which Barbara had read, and she immediately wrote an anonymous epistle to Eugene, which he afterwards enclosed to me with the following words:—

“Is this the end of all? O Marie, was it for this I trusted, adored you? It is, it must be false, yet why your silence? Why suffer me to wander for months without one word? For God’s sake say it is false! to lose my faith in you, is to lose it in human nature; whom could I trust if you have deceived me—angel as you seemed in beauty and in truth? I will not upbraid you; I well know I deserved not the bliss of calling you mine; but *he*, does *he* deserve it? there is madness in the very thought. Marie—beloved—beyond all expression beloved! write to me, say it is a foul slander; but if it be not, then do not write, let me not again see that handwriting which has power to make my heart throb

to bursting; send me then the ring of our betrothal; mine I will keep, to remind me that I once was happy. Farewell!"

This being sent under cover to my father had passed through Barbara's hands, and thus at once the mystery of the disappearance of my ring was accounted for. The anonymous epistle ran as follows:—

"A friend of the Count Eugène von Ehrenstein feels constrained to let him know, that his betrothed bride has forgotten her vows, and openly encouraged the attentions of the young Baron von Sternberg. The supposed misery of the forsaken lover forms a daily source of amusement to the happy pair, as they rove about the country alone, or sit in the garden looking at the name of the Count Eugene, carved along with that of his false mistress upon the favourite tree. The writer of this is sorry to communicate such unpleasing news, but it is better that the Count should know what is going on, than fancy himself loved, when he is only laughed at."

“Poor Eugene,” said Alfred, “how he must have suffered ! how shall we discover him ?”

My father wrote immediately to the bankers in Paris, London and elsewhere, on whom Eugene had letters of credit, but failed entirely in obtaining any account as to where he might at present be. We could only ascertain that several months previously he had called on his Parisian banker, and taken away all the money to which he remained entitled. He had neither been seen nor heard of since, and none of the persons applied to had the slightest idea of what were his intended movements. Thus all trace of him was lost, and we were again involved in doubts as to his very existence.

To me Eugene’s continued absence was a relief; I was resolved never to marry him, and I felt that a meeting, in which he should become aware of the fraud practised upon us both, could only occasion fresh and unavailing misery. My brain reeled as I read his heart-rending expres-

sions of anguish, but I could not weep. The fountain of my tears seemed closed for ever: the solace of the unhappy was denied to the guilty.

## CHAPTER XXV.

I HAVE often wondered how my life held out during that time. A constant fever preyed upon me inwardly; the refreshing sleep of youth and health was unknown to me; and when, wearied with gazing upon the terrible visions of my waking hours of darkness, my eyes closed for a few moments, horrors unspeakable seemed to surround me, and in wild despair I started to a shuddering remembrance of all the dreadful past.

One night I found myself sitting up in bed and struggling with Agnes, who tried to hold me with her little arms, and cried bitterly.

“What is it—where am I?” I screamed.

“O Marie, you said such terrible words,—

you cried, ‘Do not look at me with your horrid eyes!—I did not do it—who says it?’”

“I had a fearful dream, dear! go to sleep again.”

“O Marie, you frightened me so, and you pushed me away from you; I had nearly fallen out of the bed.”

I held the dear child to my bosom, and kissed her till she fell asleep. I then got up and struck a light; never again would I dare to sleep in the same room with any one. I had felt a kind of comfort in having this innocent being like a protecting angel by my side—I must henceforth give it up. What right had I to consolation of any kind? how had I dared to retain her so long?

The following day I told my mother that I would not allow Agnes to sleep with me any more, as I was restless at night and disturbed her. This caused no surprise: Eugene’s protracted absence, and all that had occurred respecting it, sufficiently accounted for any symptoms of

ill-health ; and my father had already observed the feverish excitement which appeared about me, and remarked that it was only natural.

Poor Agnes herself urged imploringly that she might be allowed to remain. She had slept with me ever since our return from Dresden, and this separation from me seemed to her a species of banishment, and so like a punishment, that she could not by any means be reconciled to it, and looked sorrowful all day.

At night I took her to the nurse's room, where a bed had been prepared, and undressed her myself.

"I shall not sleep here, I am sure," she sobbed ; "indeed, sister, you might have let me stay with you ; you did not disturb me much, and I like you to disturb me, and let me kiss you when you are ill and cannot sleep ; and I do not like to be here at all," she said with a fresh burst of tears.

"Agnes, darling, do you not like to do what Mamma and I wish ?"

"Yes I do—sometimes."

“If you really love us, you should always, and we wish you to sleep here.”

“But indeed, sister, I cannot sleep—I know I cannot.” And the innocent child fell fast asleep in the midst of her sobs and protestations: but oh, what a night was mine!

It was only a few weeks after this, that one evening the dear child complained of headache and sickness; she was feverish and restless all the night, which I passed by her bedside, and next morning the complaint manifested itself as scarlet fever of the most malignant kind. Her throat was swollen, her skin almost purple, and her suffering from pain and difficulty of breathing seemed to be very great.

Her parents hung over her in speechless anguish, and they would have separated me from her; but even had life been precious, I would not thus have preserved it. As it was, I held her to my heart, I put my lips to hers, I would have sucked away the poison from her blood, but death so sweetly found would have been too great

a blessing for such a one as I. The curse which I had wrought upon myself and mine had but begun. Agnes was the first victim ; she died in my arms, and a smile of love still struggled through her last agonies as she looked upon me.

Beautiful being ! “ She seemed to come from some far land,” and could not find a home here. Had she left us a year earlier, I believe I should have suffered far more. As it was, wretchedness had not left me much to lose ; so far as I was concerned, the world must ever be to me a dreary wilderness. I now felt that the power of loving was yet mine as intensely as ever ; but as it had once been the spring of all my joy, the life-giving principle of my happy existence, so now it had become the very source of all my torment. I felt as if ever on the brink of a precipice ; one word might hurl me to the depths below, and make me an object of abhorrence where I had till now been one of deep and devoted affection ; could I ever again rejoice in this love ? Oh no, I owed its

continuance merely to deception—that vile deception which had always been abhorrent to my nature, but to which I was henceforth irrevocably condemned. Every day, every hour, each moment, I must wear the mask, and disguise my heart from those nearest and dearest to me. Never more could the voice of sympathy console me; I was alone—alone for ever in the dark and dismal solitude of guilt.

Such was the language of remorse and despair; yet there were times when I felt only pity for myself, and could have wept, had tears been permitted me, as I bewailed my miserable fate. I recalled the long-continued and extreme provocation which had tempted me to commit the fatal deed—the ill-regulated state of my thoughts and affections, if not generated, at least fostered by the unsuitable system of my education—the feverish excitement, amounting almost to madness, under which I had been hurried onwards. I felt that no dislike on my own account, no selfish motive, but deep, all-engrossing love for

others had guided my hand; and at such times remorse became for a moment extinguished in pity, but only to resume its sway with increased power.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

ALFRED felt his little sister's death most keenly. He had not seen her during her illness; and for some days afterwards my father would not allow him to come into the room with me, lest any infection might still cling to me. When we met at last he wept bitterly.

“O Marie, how dull the house seems!” he said; “sometimes in the night I think I hear her sweet little voice, and start up to listen; and then all seems so still, so deathlike! How she used to run to meet us when we entered the house! and when we were sitting in our Paradise—for it was Paradise again—how pleasant it was to see her laughing eyes peeping through the green boughs; she looked just like a little

cherub—which she is now ! I wonder if she can see us.”

These sentences dropped from my brother’s lips uninterrupted by me, whilst his tears continued to fall fast. *He* could weep—all except my miserable self found that relief ; but in the general grief, the dry eye and burning cheek, which might have told of guilt and anguish, passed unobserved.

Meanwhile my nights became more fearfully disturbed, and I was obliged to keep a lamp burning, and try to read or walk about my room, until exhaustion forced me to lie down and sleep—and dream again. Once I was awakened by my own screams from a vision too horrible to write. I started up—my lamp was extinguished ; terror, too strong for endurance, too powerful for control, overcame me. I fled to Alfred’s room, the door of which was opposite to my own, and shrieking I know not what, I threw myself upon the bed of the startled boy.

“ Marie, is it you—what is the matter ? ”

“ Barbara—look ! there she is, close beside me.

She threatens me—look, look !” And I buried my face in the bed-clothes, as if I could thus shut out the phantom conjured up by my own imagination.

“You are dreaming, Marie,” said Alfred, putting his arms around me ; “awake ! Barbara is not here ; how can she be here ? rouse yourself, and remember she is dead.”

His words recalled me to myself.

“Dead !—yes, I recollect—it was a dream ;” and I shuddered.

“Go back, and try to sleep again, dear sister,” said Alfred.

“No, no, let me stay here ; I cannot go back, I will sit beside you ; let me stay !”

“Surely if you wish it ; but do you then lie down, and let me watch you.”

“Oh no, I could not sleep, I do not want any more sleep ; I will sit here beside you.”

Presently he was again asleep ; calm and peaceful as an infant slumbering he lay there, nor stirred until, as the first rosy beam of sunlight

glanced through the half-open window-shutter and fell across his eyes, an exquisite smile played over his face, and he awoke.

“O Marie, I have had such a delightful dream,” he said; “I thought Agnes appeared to me, with her golden hair grown very long and floating around her like a beautiful cloud; she smiled just as she used, only even more sweetly, and said with her soft silvery voice, ‘Dear brother Alfred, do not cry any more for me; do you know where I am?’ and I said, stretching out my arms as if they could have reached her, ‘Where are you, darling?’ ‘I am with him who said, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me;’ and he has sent me to tell you this, and to bid you and Father and Mother and Marie not mourn for me any more; you will some day come to me, and I will meet you, and we shall be all happy together.’ I tried to grasp her again, but she smiled, and crying ‘He calls!’ she vanished from my sight. Oh, I feel so happy now! I would not bring her back even if I could.”

I left him and returned to my own room. "We have each dreamed according to our deserts; angels minister to Alfred's slumbers, whilst to mine—" Such were my thoughts. O God, how miserable I was! but my cup was not yet full.

One night I awoke from another hideous nightmare; the lamp yet burned, and by its light I saw Alfred hanging over me: his countenance was grave—almost solemn—as he said, "Marie, you seem to have awful dreams; I heard your cries, and ran to awaken you."

I knew not what might have passed my lips in sleep; and the peculiar expression of my brother's countenance awakening all my fears, I stammered out, "Yes, I have sometimes—the shock of Barbara's death—and I felt then how wrong it was to have hated any one as I did her—and Agnes too—I think all together have made me ill."

Alfred's countenance brightened, and he said, kissing me, "Your conscience is too sensitive, Marie; we might all have feverish dreams upon

the same account ; you must get rid of such thoughts."

I hoped he had been satisfied with my explanation ; but he was more than usually grave and silent throughout the day, and I felt that the gulf which had been gradually widening between us since the commission of my crime was now likely to be still further increased by an unwonted reserve upon his part.

I was from this time more than ever upon the watch against sleep, but it came notwithstanding ; and again and again in the dead of night did I lose sight of consequences and fly for refuge to Alfred's room, whilst during the day I shunned his presence and could not endure the strangely mournful glance of his eye.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

ONE morning very early, as I sat alone in the saloon, I heard a well-remembered voice hastily utter my name. A well-known step approached the door—it opened. “Marie, my own, my best-beloved!” sounded in my ears, and I was clasped to the breast of Eugene.

For one instant a sensation of exquisite bliss passed through my heart and thrilled through every nerve; it was over, and with a quick movement I disengaged myself from his arms.

“Marie, will you not then forgive me?” he cried, falling at my feet; “fool, fool that I was to believe a lie! but I have suffered; look at me, see whether I have not suffered; and you—how you are changed!”

Still I answered not. He sprang up and began to pace the room with hurried steps. His face was pale ; the flush of joy which overspread it when he entered had died away, and now indeed it was evident that he had suffered deeply. The expression of buoyant youth was gone, and he looked as if even happiness could not restore it. I felt oppressed almost to fainting, and rose to leave the room, but sank back in my chair and covered my face.

“ Marie ! ” he said impetuously, throwing himself at my feet ; “ Marie, if you have ceased to love me, say so ; I deserve it ; say the word, and I go for ever.”

“ I love you, Eugène, but—”

His countenance again became radiant. “ *But*—ah Marie, if you love me, you will, you must forgive me ! How could I ever doubt you ? why did I not come at once, and assure myself of your truth ? Say that you forgive me ! ”

“ Yes, Eugène, I never felt angry with you.”

“ Then why look so sad—so changed ? ”

“ You forget, Eugene—”

“ Poor little Agnes—ah yes, I did indeed forget. Again forgive me, dearest ; you see I am still the same selfish fellow as ever,” he answered with a melancholy smile, as he drew a chair close to me and sat down.

“ Once more by your side, dear Marie !” he whispered. And now he told me how he had watched day by day for an answer to his last letter, with a refutation of what he at one moment hoped to find a slander, and the next started from as a truth. At length he received my ring in a blank envelope, and at once believed the damning proof. He immediately left England, and had since wandered over Italy, Greece, and part of Russia.

“ But I have nothing to tell you about these countries,” he said ; “ my heart was closed, and my eyes in vain opened upon things rich and rare in nature and art. By night and day I saw but one image—my Marie in the arms of another—her first love forsaken—forgotten. At length I felt

an irrepressible longing to see my home ; I would come in secret and depart unknown, but come I would ; and last night, in silence and in darkness, I entered the once happy home of my youth. I met the steward, and his first words were, ‘ Oh, Count Eugene, how could you believe the lies they told you ? ’ Marie, what a revulsion did this one sentence cause throughout my whole frame ! I saw all ; even before he told me the circumstances I felt how I had been duped, miserably duped ; now it seems to me inexplicable that I could have been so blinded. I went away suspecting, fearing the machinations of your unhappy sister. Why did it not occur to me to attribute all that seemed incomprehensible to that source ? But it is over ; nothing now can separate us on earth.”

Again he pressed me to his heart, and again did conscience force me to repel his warm and true embrace. He looked surprised and hurt, and my mother’s entrance relieved me from a position almost too painful and embarrassing for endurance.

I left them and went to my own chamber ; I struggled to regain calmness, to think of some plan by which I might extricate myself ; but none occurred to me, and at last I resolved to be guided by circumstances, and trust to the invention of the moment, should Eugene urge our union. I then returned and took my place at the breakfast-table. Alfred sat by his father's side, and as I passed he pressed my hand tenderly ; I felt that his eye rested upon me continually, but I dared not meet it.

I know not whether the resolution to separate myself for ever from Eugene may have really increased my love for him, or whether it may only have awakened me to a consciousness of the extent of my attachment of which I was before unaware ; but be this as it may, I felt that I now loved him with an intensity which surprised myself ; still my determination never wavered for a moment.

From the time of his return I studiously avoided being alone with him, hoping thus to ward off, at

least temporarily, the dreaded subject ; but my efforts were vain ; before a week had passed, he said to me with an expression of great seriousness, " Marie, I must speak with you alone."

I trembled violently as I rose. We went out together. Unconsciously our footsteps turned in the same direction as that we had pursued on the day he had first spoken to me of love, and we walked on in silence : at length Eugene said, " Believing your assurance that you still love me, Marie, I have striven in vain to account for your strange coldness, and even to conceal it from myself. Why try to deceive me by words, when every look tells me you are changed ? Why not say so at once, and put an end to this harrowing suspense, as bad, if not worse, than the most dreadful certainty itself ? Speak, Marie ! I shall not reproach you ; the fault at first was mine ; I deserve to suffer ; say you have ceased to love me."

" I cannot say so, Eugene ; I love you more than ever, but—"

" Why always add this *but*, Marie ?" he said

impatiently ; “ if you still love me, what can interfere between us ? who shall dare to do so ? ” he added with flashing eyes.

I was silent. “ Marie, Marie,” he cried with deep emotion, “ do not break my heart ! the spring of my youth is gone already, and it depends upon you whether the rest of my existence is to be a burthen of inexpressible misery, or— Marie, dearest, best beloved, say you will be mine—now ! months have passed away, weary wretched months to us both, since the time we should have been united ; why still defer longer ? ”

“ I cannot marry you, Eugene,” I exclaimed with vehemence, all self-control giving way ; “ I cannot—I will never, never marry you ! ”

He paused, looked at me for an instant with a glance in which astonishment, love, and the wildest despair were blended, then suddenly throwing his arms around me, he pressed me in a frenzied embrace to his bosom, and fled in the direction of his home.

How I reached mine I know not ; I only re-

member that as I passed the river on my way, the thought of self-destruction flashed upon my mind, and I stopped; one moment and I should sleep for ever; I should have rest—rest! Oh, how sweet to be at rest! and from this no dread of eternity and of the sinner's doom—no fear of dreams more awful still than those of earth—retarded me. But another recollection glanced across my mind, and I was saved. I had once heard my father speak of a case of self-murder, when the crime had been committed under very distressing circumstances by a youth, who had left both parents and sisters to mourn his loss. “It was a fearful deed,” he said; “a cowardly egotism, thus to fly from ills which fell upon himself alone, at the expense of inflicting upon those who loved him the bitterest, most dreadful of all evils,—to escape himself, by disgracing and stigmatizing a whole family; for let its apologists disguise it as they may, suicide is still murder, and he who commits it, except in madness, is no other than a cold-hearted and cold-blooded assassin.”

All this I remembered. “No !” I said, “I am already a murderess, but for their sakes I will conceal my guilt ; never shall humiliation and disgrace be inflicted on those dearly loved ones by such a selfish act of mine. I will live—I deserve to live—since life is torture !”

On the evening of this dreadful day a note was brought to my father which he read and handed to me without a word. It was as follows :—

“My guardian and my best and dearest friend, farewell ! tomorrow I go hence—whither I care not—when, if ever, to return, I know not. Marie has forsaken me, she drives me from her ! for her I could have died ; cruel girl ! she asks more than life, and I give it. Farewell !”

“What am I to understand from that ?” said my father in a severe tone. I could not speak, I was torn with conflicting emotions. I felt that Alfred’s eye was upon me, and I heard one of his long, deep sighs.

The guilt which pressed upon my heart, now forcing me by remorse to act in a manner which

might lead to its own detection, now with coward hand dragging me into an opposite and equally dangerous course, urged me in the present emergency to an equivocation which my soul abhorred.

"I cannot marry, father," I said, with a trembling voice and without raising my eyes, "when Agnes is scarcely yet cold in her grave."

"This then was your objection?"

"Eugene did not give me time to explain—to speak," I said hesitatingly.

"Then I may write and tell him it was all a mistake?—no, I will rather go and tell him that he misunderstood you; may I not?"

"Do as you will, father, but let him not ask me to marry now:" and with these words I left the room.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

EUGENE did not go; he did not however re-appear amongst us for some days, and then a heavy cloud hung over his countenance. He no longer sought to converse with me, and feeling as one encompassed by some profound mystery which he cannot pierce, was unable to resign himself to happy emotions. To me anything was a relief which spared me the expression of his love, and by keeping him at a distance prevented all allusion either to the past or the future.

Circumstances were about to favour my design respecting a postponement of our marriage, though in a manner I had little anticipated. For some time past—I may almost say from the very night to which I have alluded, when awaking from a

frightful dream I found my brother standing over me—a gradual but visible alteration had taken place in Alfred. All elasticity of spirit was gone; his countenance, always pensive, had become tinged with the deepest melancholy; his step was languid, his manner absent, and the ordinary paleness of his complexion had increased and become, as it were, rarified into perfect transparency. His eye no longer kindled, as it was wont, with every passing emotion; his face no longer glowed with the brilliant colour which used to flash over it, rendering it for the moment as perfect in physical beauty as it constantly was in that of a spiritual character. His favourite books lay neglected, the piano-forte untouched, and he would sometimes sit for hours absorbed in reverie, and, except by frequent sighs, giving scarcely any sign of life. I believe it was to me that the change first became apparent, for it was accompanied by symptoms, the origin of which I alone could have suspected.

I observed him start when I entered the room,

or when my voice aroused him from one of the gloomy fits of abstraction which daily became more habitual to him. Sometimes he gazed upon me with a fixed, inquiring expression, under which I shrunk and writhed with internal agony. At other times he would clasp his arms around me with a wild despairing fondness, and in one of these moments the words "Forgive me, sister!" fell from his lips.

"Forgive you, Alfred! what have I to forgive in you?"

"No matter, no matter, dearest; I do not think I am well—I scarcely know what I say or think; sometimes I fancy I must be going mad."

"O Alfred, do not speak so! what have you ever done to—" and I paused. It appeared as if something in the intonation of my voice struck him; he started and half recoiled; his searching glance was again fixed upon me; then breaking suddenly away, he burst from the room exclaiming, "Oh God! could madness be worse than this, or am I mad already?"

The frightful thought—"Does he suspect me?" now first took a definite form in my mind, whilst in every look and gesture of my brother an answer to the horrible question was found or fancied by my terrified imagination; then indeed retribution began! So completely had he been linked with all my occupations, with every thought—so despairingly had I clung to the consciousness of his love, and in its fulness found a refuge, even during the partial estrangement which had taken place between us after the commission of my crime—that now, as this last consolation seemed about to depart, I felt as if life must henceforth have for me only torments such as none before had endured on earth.

One day I was sitting with my parents, when my father said, "Anna, have you not lately observed anything particular in Alfred's appearance?"

My mother looked up with a startled air as he continued, "I do not think he is well, he has grown thin and pale, and last night there was a

bright hectic spot upon his cheek which alarmed me."

"Yes, I have observed all you speak of, Edward; his appetite is quite gone; I have been trying, with the little things he used to like when a child, to tempt him to eat, but he turns from everything, or only pretends to eat to please me. I had never taken notice of it to either of you nor yet to himself, hoping the change was in my own fancy, as you did not seem to have observed it; but today I could not help telling him I feared he was ill. 'No, not ill, mother,' he said, and kissed me with one of his sweet smiles; and then I thought perhaps it was not illness, but fretting, for you know"—and here her voice faltered and her eyes filled with tears—"he was very fond of poor Agnes."

I could not bear to remain longer, and went to my room, where my mother came to me shortly after to say that my father thought change of air necessary for Alfred, and that we were to pass the winter in Italy.

Italy ! how would my heart and that of Alfred have bounded at such a prospect a few years sooner—but now !

A short time afterwards, when I found him sitting languidly beneath the willow-tree and mentioned what was about to take place, one long sad gaze passed between us, and then falling into each other's arms we silently mourned over ourselves and for each other.

What thoughts may have been in his mind I can only conjecture ; before mine arose the happy past connected with that spot, the wretched present, and the dark, blank future. Where were now the visions of my childhood ? where the feelings of exulting gladness, the intense delight with which scarce five years before we had anticipated our journey to Dresden, and talked over the possibility of another at some future time to the land of poetry and art ?—gone, gone for ever !

“ I would rather not go,” said Alfred, raising his head from my bosom ; “ it will do me no good, and I would rather be buried beside dear

Agnes ; but as my father wishes it, I shall make no objection."

All was soon arranged for our departure ; and Eugene, who could not accompany us, having been sent for on account of the illness of his uncle at Vienna, promised to meet us at Rome.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

It was about the middle of September that we set out for Marseilles, whence we were to sail for Nice ; my father, thinking that a short sea-voyage might prove beneficial to Alfred, had chosen this route in preference to crossing the Alps.

The wind was fair, the sky bright and cloudless, when we embarked ; and the novelty of the scene, the fresh, exhilarating air, and the varied beauties of the coast along which our vessel glided, seemed to re-awaken in Alfred the dormant faculty of enjoyment. His eye, for the first time for many months, manifested an interest in what went on around him, and a faint smile played upon his lips when my father called his attention

to some passing charm contrived by the hand of nature or of man.

The sun went down with the radiant glory which so generally attends its farewell in those favoured climes, and as its warm rays fell upon the face of the pale fragile boy, I saw the eyes of those around fixed with deep interest upon him—then with pitying compassion turned upon his parents.

After a prosperous voyage we reached Nice, where my father purposed to remain for a short time; and the invigorating air of an Italian climate seemed at once to infuse new life into Alfred's spirit. Removed from the scenes with which his late misery had been associated, it appeared as if the impressions there received had become in some degree deadened. His manner towards myself partially resumed its early frankness, and the moody fits of silence in which he had latterly indulged became less frequent.

I might perhaps have found a temporary and mournful satisfaction in observing this change,

but that I felt it could not last. Had my brother's suspicions been unfounded—had I lost his confidence and affection merely through any misconstruction on his part, which time and circumstances might possibly clear away—I might indeed have hoped to regain my former place in his esteem and affection. But how different was the case! here was no misapprehension, no groundless suspicion, no perverted circumstance; all was true—a fearful and unchangeable truth, which had forced itself upon his unsuspecting mind, and eaten its way into his heart. Thus, as in every instance since the commission of my crime, change, instead of relief, only brought to me new tortures. Not knowing the moment when conscience might wring from me a fresh betrayal of my secret, or circumstances re-awaken in Alfred the memory of all that seemed for the time to be almost forgotten, my most bitter hours were those in which he sought me, my anguish most keen when, but for one dreadful recollection, I should have felt most happy.

We remained only a short time at Nice, from whence, passing rapidly by Genoa and Florence, we travelled to Rome, where we intended to remain during the winter.

## CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT but a weight of guilt on my soul could have rendered it insensible to the first glimpse of the eternal city? Alfred's face became full of animation, and the fire of enthusiasm burned upon his cheek and in his eye, as the distant view at once burst upon our sight. "O Marie," he exclaimed, as we at length passed the Porta del Popolo, "we are in *Rome*!" and his eyes, which had been earnestly turned in search of passing objects of interest, now eagerly sought mine.

And where were they?—fixed, intently fixed upon that most beloved face, but not in sympathy. No answering expression of joy, of long-cherished hope fulfilled, of youthful enthusiasm, met his fond and ardent gaze. Cold and with-

ing must have been that look—and it struck home! I saw his cheek become colourless; I saw the beaming light of youth and love fade from his eye, until it settled in a glassy stare upon my face; I saw his hands clenched as if from some internal spasm,—I saw it all! for, though conscious that death was in my glance, I had no power to withdraw it,—I see it now!

“What is the matter, my child?” exclaimed my mother; “Edward, he is dying! speak, Alfred, what is it?”

“Nothing, mother,” murmured the boy; “I am—only—sick.” And his head drooped upon his breast.

The horses were urged forwards, my father supporting my apparently lifeless brother in his arms, and we quickly reached the hotel. There Alfred was laid upon a bed, and soon restored to consciousness; but, except to answer the tender inquiries of his mother, he did not speak. Once only during this evening his eyes met mine; they lingered for a moment, then wandered searchingly

over my features, and again closed. He turned languidly towards the wall, and appeared to slumber.

“He sleeps now,” said my mother, bending anxiously over the couch: “Marie, my love, go to bed; you too are ill, and need rest.”

She would have kissed me, but I turned away and left the room.

The next morning Alfred did not appear till some time after his usual hour, and then looked wan and feeble. He seemed little disposed to make any exertion, but did not object to go out, when my father proposed visiting some of the interesting scenes around us; nor did I.

Day after day we wandered listlessly amidst the memorials of past ages; that which had so often occupied our thoughts and dreams passed before our eyes; but what was it now to us? I saw but the wasting form of my brother; I felt nought but my own misery.

Without manifesting any outward endeavour to avoid me which could be remarked by those

around us, it was now evident to me that Alfred again and increasingly shrank from my presence. He even avoided looking at me ; and when obliged to do so, there was an expression in his countenance which I at least could not misinterpret. No longer did I ask myself, "Does he suspect?" but "Does he *doubt* my guilt?" Change of scene and a partial amendment of health had, as I before said, for a time produced a certain renovation of his spirits ; and the suspicions which for months had sapped his strength, and threatened to destroy his life, had partially yielded under the joint influence of an atmosphere well-suited to the condition of his bodily frame, and of a succession of picturesque objects congenial to his natural tone of mind, and affording a healthful stimulus to his morbidly depressed feelings. But this short interval of peace was over. At the moment when in the full excitement of his own ardent emotions, forgetting all that was painful and terrible in the last few months, and with the quick instinct of affection, turning to the loved companion of his

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early days in search of that sympathy which from her he never used to seek in vain, he had encountered a glance in which I felt—I knew—that all was written.

Outward things had no power to give me happiness, but they had a power to goad and torture me. The remembrance of what I had been, of my former capacity for intense and exquisite enjoyment, the bright visions of my childhood and early youth, all rose before my fancy as I entered the gates of Rome. I could not look around me. What now was Rome with all its hallowed recollections to me?—a tomb. I heard the joyous exclamations of my brother, I watched his animated countenance, I felt the contrast between guilt and innocence. As he was in this moment, I might have been. Then our eyes met,—his doom was sealed!

One day we had spent several hours in the Vatican, and Alfred seemed much fatigued. He lay upon a sofa in the evening, whilst my father read to him a tragedy of Alfieri. His eyes were

closed, but the deep sighs which occasionally burst from his bosom proved that he did not sleep.

I had seated myself in a dark corner of the room, whence I could gaze upon his pale face unseen. My mother sat at the table sewing, but by degrees her needle moved more slowly. The work dropped from her hand; and her eyes, which from time to time had wandered to the couch, became fixed there, whilst tears began to fall rapidly down her cheeks.

The singular attenuation of my brother's form, the almost unearthly beauty of his features, and the transparent delicacy of his complexion, were thrown into full relief by the bright crimson covering of the couch upon which he lay; whilst the contrast between the child-like innocence and purity of his countenance, and the expression of profound melancholy which pervaded it, was more than usually striking. Once his eyes opened, and I observed that he turned them upon his mother. He saw that she was weeping, and

half unclosed his lips as if to speak ; but the sound died away on his tongue ; and after moving for a moment uneasily upon the sofa, he seemed again disposed to slumber.

Presently he called his father, and I caught the words now uttered in a low tone, "Do you think, father, there would be time for me to go home?"

"What do you mean, my dear boy? Why do you ask if there would be time?"

Alfred looked anxiously towards his mother, whose tears were still flowing ; and my father, understanding his meaning, signed to her to leave the room. I was unobserved, and did not move.

"Father," he said, "I think—I know—that I am dying ; and indeed, dear father, I have no longer any wish to live. The world is a different place from what I once fancied it, and all I now desire is to return home again, to be laid beside our little Agnes."

"How can you speak thus, Alfred?" replied my father, deeply affected ; "can you think so

lightly of leaving us all? How should we bear to part with you? how could Marie live without you?"

"Marie—poor Marie!" said Alfred in a tone of the utmost dejection.

I could endure no more; I rose, and noiselessly left the room.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

I BELIEVE my father did not attempt to combat my brother's anxious desire to return home ; but, unwilling to leave any means untried from which there seemed to be a possibility of his deriving benefit, he persuaded Alfred to consent to make trial, for at least a few days, of the more salubrious air of Naples, promising that, if this failed in some measure to restore him, we should at once embark for the south of France.

We set out immediately, but a more rapid change than had yet taken place now manifested itself ; and upon the evening of our arrival at Naples, whither we had travelled by easy stages, it became apparent that my brother would have been quite unequal to proceed further, had such

at the time been our intention. He passed a restless night, and on the ensuing morning vainly strove to rouse himself, whilst he endeavoured to persuade my father at once to permit him to attempt the voyage home. He was completely exhausted by the exertion of dressing, and lay upon the sofa for the rest of the day, unable to move and apparently almost unconscious.

Towards evening he seemed rather less oppressed with languor, and asked my father to read to him some favourite portions of the Scriptures.

When the reader's voice ceased, Alfred closed his eyes for a moment, and his lips moved as if in prayer; he then softly uttered my name. I went to his side.

"Leave us, dear father," he said; and we were alone. Once and again his lips half opened; I heard his breath come quick; I knelt by his side, and saw the throbbing pulses of his heart as he struggled for utterance. At length, looking at me with an indescribable mixture of severity

and compassion, he said in nearly inarticulate accents, "Marie, I am dying; *you* know—why; yet even from death you could recall me; even now I think that I could live, if you were not—" and he laboured for breath.

"Truth—Marie! I want to know the *truth*. I fear I do know it—too well. Still there clings around my heart one lingering hope—only make it certainty. Marie, beloved sister, look at me!" and he threw his arms around me. His head rested upon my shoulder, and every sinking energy of soul and body was concentrated in the gaze which he fixed upon my face. The accusing spirit left his eye, and the full tide of deep and passionate affection seemed ready to well forth with all the force and tenderness acquired by long-continued restraint, as he whispered in a thrilling and half-stifled voice, "Marie, say you did not do it—if you can!"

Urged on by some irresistible power, which may have been the pressure of my inevitable but as yet unfulfilled fate, or which was perhaps only

the climax of despair, I exclaimed, "I did it, Alfred—but it was for *you*!"

I saw his countenance alter; the look of overflowing tenderness and love changed into one of horror and despair, his arms relaxed their grasp, I heard one long and hollow groan, I saw him fall back heavily upon the couch: I saw no more!

## CHAPTER XXXII.

[THE narrative of the unhappy writer is here interrupted; she makes no mention of any further particulars respecting her brother's death, or of the circumstances connected with her own illness and subsequent journey. From another source the Translator has learned the following facts.]

Upon entering the room some time after he had left his children together, the Count von Arnheim discovered them both, to all appearance, dead. Alfred lay upon the couch, already stiff and cold; Marie had fallen beside it; a faint pulsation could be distinguished in her bosom, but for many hours all endeavours to recall her to life were fruitless.

When partially recovered, she looked at first

confused, and as if struggling for recollection ; then, with a start, as if suddenly aroused and stung into full consciousness by a dart from some unseen hand, she raised herself, looked wildly into her mother's face, and in a thick hoarse voice pronounced her brother's name.

The unhappy Countess shook her head mournfully, but could not answer ; and Marie, indistinctly murmuring, " My Alfred—dead !" sunk back senseless once more. She lay for some days without speech or motion, and apparently without consciousness.

At last her eyes opened ; she looked round the room and shuddered, but did not speak. When asked to rise, she made no answer, but submitted quietly to be dressed. Food being placed before her she turned from it with loathing, until her father earnestly besought her for his sake to endeavour to take such nourishment as was necessary to her restoration.

She looked at him, whilst he spoke, as if only half aware of his meaning, but from that time

she took a small portion of whatever was placed before her.

By degrees her strength returned, and she was soon able to go a little into the air, leaning on her father's arm. One day she wandered out alone, and it was not until after long and anxious search that they discovered her sitting on the beach, her eyes fixed upon the sea with an expression of hopeless melancholy, which excited in her father the strongest fears lest her evidently tottering reason should entirely give way.

As soon as her strength was sufficiently restored he determined to return home, where, surrounded by objects abounding in tender recollections, he trusted she might be awakened once more to life and hope. On the voyage she still continued in the same state; she would sit for hours with her arm leaning on the vessel's side, her pale cheek resting on her hand, and her dark eye gazing into the depths of the sea; and so intense, so profound, yet so calm and passionless was the expression of sorrow in her

face and form, that one might have taken her for a beautiful statue, in which the artist in a moment of inspiration had embodied the sublime conception of human grief condemned to immortality, and brooding over the idea of its own dark and irreversible destiny.

Once, and only once, upon the journey, her countenance was seen to denote a passing interest. They had stopped to change horses at a small village in the south of France, and a little girl of some five years old, with golden hair and laughing blue eyes, came close to the carriage and sang a national air in a clear ringing tone of voice. The song over, with a winning yet bashful smile she held out her hand. The door was open, Marie sprang out, seized the child, pressed her again and again to her breast, kissed her blushing cheek, and putting a purse into her hand watched her as she bounded away to show the treasure to her mother, who stood at a little distance; then slowly and with a deep sigh she re-entered the carriage, leaned back, and closed

her eyes. "She thinks of darling Agnes," thought her mother, and she wept.

They reached home late one evening, and upon entering the well-known room Marie was observed to shudder.

From this time there was more of consciousness in her expression ; still she spoke not, and her father became more and more desirous that the Count Eugene, who had been hitherto detained by the continued illness of his uncle, should speedily return.

Love had been apparently, and we know how truly, the ruling principle of her life ; and grounding hope upon this, her parents looked forward anxiously to a meeting with the companion of her early years, in the hope of its being instrumental in further awakening her dormant faculties.

One day she had been wandering in the garden, according to her custom, and was sitting beneath the willow, when the young Count suddenly stood before her.

"Marie !" he said softly, sitting down by her

side, and tenderly passing his arm around her waist. A slight flush tinged her cheek ; she laid her head upon his shoulder and uttered the words, " Dear Eugene ! "

" Thank God for the sound of that voice, my own love ! Oh speak, speak again ! "

" My heart is dead, Eugene. "

" Your heart will live again, my Marie. God is good, he will restore you to us. Such a heart as yours was never meant for aught but life and love. "

She trembled and drew away from his arms ; and that day she spoke no more. But the spell was broken. On the following morning, when Marie rejoined her family, it was evident that a change had taken place, and the Count von Arnheim watched anxiously for its development.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

[HERE Marie's narrative recommences as follows.]

All my recollections of the period immediately succeeding my brother's death are so faint and so confused, that I can give no account of them. I believe I was on the sea; and again, I remember once seeing a beautiful child which reminded me of Agnes, but whether in a dream or in reality I am uncertain.

No one has ever spoken to me since of our journey or of my own condition while it lasted; and consequently, whether I lay in a state of actual sleep and all which I fancied to be around me was merely visionary, or whether the shock, which had almost destroyed my miserable exist-

ence, had for a time deadened both sense and reason so as to prevent my fully understanding aught that passed before my eyes, I know not; nor had I then any idea of the length of time which thus elapsed.

My first conscious and distinct remembrance is of being brought into our own house, and feeling a cold shiver pass through my frame as I entered. I then knew I was awake, and at home. I saw the anxious looks of my parents, and how they tried to win a word from me; but I could not speak. My mind, though still partially confused, was full of its own woes, and these were unutterable.

One day I had wandered into the garden, and sat in the spot once so truly called our Paradise. My eyes were fixed upon the names carved on the bark, when all at once I saw Eugene before me. As he sat down by my side a feeling of overpowering tenderness stole over me. I saw his haggard countenance—its hopeless wretchedness; I thought not of its cause; for the moment

I forgot my own sufferings—Alfred—everything but himself; and leaning my head upon his bosom, I uttered his name.

“Thank God!” he exclaimed, and a vivid expression of joy flashed across his face. He hung over me fondly; he spoke to me as he had ever done; but his looks of love, his words of tender consolation, were like scorpion stings to my guilty conscience: recollection returned, and I withdrew from his arms.

From this day I think my mind became quite settled and calm, and it was evident that those around me were full of hope. My health seemed nearly re-established, and although I still sought for solitude, and spoke but little, the improvement which had taken place led my friends to expect a perfect restoration in every way.

I was now in a frame of mind entirely different from that which had immediately followed my sister Barbara’s death, as well as from that to which the sight of Eugene’s letters had awakened me. During the first period I had been stunned into a

paralysis of all feeling. The few hours in which my crime had been planned and executed were full of intense and feverish excitement, and the two months following were spent in a torpor which I can only compare to the state immediately succeeding the intoxicating effects induced by opium. I felt, as I have before said, neither hope nor fear, nor emotion of any kind, save a dull and miserable sense of existence, as of a weight too heavy for endurance.

Then came the awful time, when roused into madness and despair, my guilty conscience in the dead of night revealed its horrible secret to the ears of my pure-minded and loving brother, there to enter and prey upon his life, and make me thus a double murderess.

With my late illness every trace of fever had ceased. I no longer started from my bed under the influence of dreadful nightmare; no longer did visions too horrible for description haunt my waking hours, as in the second period of my misery; neither, as in the first, was I confused

and but dreamily conscious of the past. No metaphysical mist now obscured the word *murder*; every faculty was awake, every letter on the tablet of memory clear and distinct—written in blood. Yet was I calm—ever calm; woe, inexpressible, hopeless woe was my portion, and in the quietude of fixed despair I endured it.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE than a year had rolled over, during the lapse of which I observed a gradual improvement in the spirits of those about me. Eugene was with us constantly; and although at all times fond and affectionate in his manner, and watchful of my slightest wish, he seemed to be restrained by respect for my sufferings from alluding to our marriage.

I felt however that this state of things could not last, and often meditated long and deeply over some plan by which I might be enabled to escape from that very lot once considered by me as the summit of earthly happiness, but which a sense of guilt now and for ever forbid me to accept.

Various schemes occurred to me, but at last I decided upon one as alone feasible, which I had again and again rejected through a frightful consciousness of the new misery it must entail upon those I loved.

“Yes,” I said, “I must leave my home; I must be to them as dead. To save myself from the guilt of self-destruction, and them from the stain which would attach to my having committed it, I must drag on a weary, lonely life—a living death; unknown, unloved, a blank amidst the universe, the universe a blank to me. Yes, I must perish from their eyes! scarcely have my parents raised their drooping heads from bewailing the fate of my murdered brother, when again they must be laid in the dust—again, and by the same hand—the hand of their child. And is there no remedy? none, none. What, marry Eugene! offer to him in plighted faith the same hand which has robbed a sister of her life,—promise that faith with the same tongue which by its dreadful avowal has no less surely destroyed the

existence of a brother ! Marry Eugene ! would not the rocks fall upon, the lightnings scathe, the earth open to engulf the murderess ? No, never, never will I incur this fresh guilt, even to save them from another source of wretchedness. I cannot, will not, *dare* not do it."

Scarcely had I come to this conclusion when Eugene said to me one day, " Marie, I have kept a long silence, may I speak ? I would not sooner have intruded my own wishes upon your grief, but you will not surely now reject me. Could he whom you mourn have desired to see his sister's life pass away in hopeless regrets ? Think of this, if you will not consider me, and promise to be mine."

I did not actually refuse, but I felt it quite impossible to utter words of compliance, and he went on, " You are silent, dearest ; may I speak to your father ? may I tell him you have at last consented to be mine without further delay ?"

" Do so, if you will," I replied at length with gloomy reluctance.

Overjoyed at this apparent approval he did not seem to remark the manner in which it was given ; or, if observed, it appeared to him but the natural effect of my own sorrowful and overpowering recollections.

That day fortnight was fixed for the performance of the ceremony—never, never to be performed.

And now commenced the preparations for our bridal. Silently, and without the power of assuming the smallest appearance of interest in what went on around, I played my part. I too had preparations to make.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE eve of our wedding-day had arrived, and the little party met together, unconsciously to all but *one*, for the last time.

My parents looked more cheerful than they had ever done since Alfred's death ; and upon Eugene's pale countenance I saw an expression of joy and hope which had once been habitual there, but which after this day I knew could never more revisit it. I heard my father and Eugene talk over our plans, the journey we were about to make, and the various objects of curiosity and interest deserving attention which we should meet with in our course.

I remained a silent listener, until overpowered by the intensity of my emotions, and fearful

of losing all self-control, I rose to leave the room.

I longed to throw myself into their arms, to press them again and again to my bosom, but I dared not; I did not even venture to utter the usual "Good-night." They thought I would return.

On reaching the doorway, for one moment I stopped beneath its shadow, to take a last look at those whom I was thus leaving, without one parting embrace, for ever. My father's head was bent over the map, upon which he had been tracing the route we were to follow; Eugene was gazing intently upon the ring of his betrothal; and my mother, having just completed a beautiful piece of work which was to make a part of my bridal attire, held it up, saying with a smile, "Look, Eugene, is it not pretty?"

I turned quickly away, reached my chamber, and entering, bolted the door. The first object which met my eye was my wedding-dress, carefully arranged preparatory to the morrow. Se-

veral small packets lay upon the table, which by their addresses I knew to be bridal gifts from friends and relatives. One alone I opened; it was directed by my father's hand, and contained a box enclosing a gold chain and locket of exquisite workmanship. Upon the reverse side of the trinket appeared two curls of beautiful hair, both of golden hue, and only differing slightly in shade. The names "Alfred" and "Agnes," within a black circle, told the rest.

In a state of delirious excitement I began to put on the dress of coarse materials which I had prepared as a disguise. "And shall I—can I—leave them without a word, without one last farewell? no, no, I cannot." I snatched up a pen, and with trembling, burning hand traced as nearly as I can remember the following words:—"Eugene, I love, and yet I leave you. Mystery involves me, fate impels me onward; death, or worse than death, a living tomb, awaits me. Farewell, father, mother! farewell all—for ever!"

All was now done; I clasped my father's latest,

dearest gift around my neck, thrust the precious locket into my bosom, and approached the glass-door which led into the garden. There I stopped and looked around ; my heart felt bursting, my brain reeled, but I did not hesitate. I withdrew the bolts, and stepping out closed the door behind me.

As I turned away, a low whine, accompanied by a sound as of something striking against the glass within, caught my attention, and I perceived that Carlo had as usual followed me from the saloon. "The noise he makes will betray me," I said ; and hastily returning I re-opened the door, and took him in my arms.

"On such a night as this," I thought, as I proceeded with rapid and uncertain steps through the calm, clear moonshine, "On such a night as this did I arouse the avenging spirit which was never more to slumber !"

I reached the gate, and turned to look again upon the beloved scenes of my happy, innocent childhood. My eye fell upon the willow, and a

resistless desire to stand once more beneath its branches seized me. I flew towards the spot, entered, and laying down the dog I flung my arms around the trunk, and pressed my lips to the place where I knew the names of those beloved ones were graven.

A sudden movement made by Carlo, accompanied by a low short bark as if of recognition, startled me, and looking down I saw him settled in a listening attitude at my feet. Hastily seizing him, I imprinted another kiss of agony upon the tree, and keeping under the shadow of the elms which overhung my path, I again reached the entrance-gate. There, once more, and for the last time, I paused to look around. I saw a tall dark figure standing by the willow; in another moment it had disappeared amongst the branches.

“My Eugene—gone to dream of happiness!” thought I; “dream on, my beloved, for this night—tomorrow’s dawn will waken thee!”

Breathless, trembling, I hurried along the high road. I knew that soon after midnight a diligence

would overtake me ; but such was the frenzy of my mind that the sound of its approaching wheels failed to reach my ear, and it had almost passed when the dog jumped to the ground, barking loudly.

I called to the conductor : the door was opened, and I took my seat. Carlo followed. "He would love me," I thought ; "he was Eugene's gift ;" and for a moment I hesitated. "No, I dare not ; it might lead to my detection." "Let him go," I said to the conductor, and I thrust the poor animal rudely away. "Will you leave him here alone?" said the man in a deprecating tone.

"He is not far from home," I answered ; "he can reach it easily."

"The dog is happy," I thought ; "*he* has a home !"

Day and night I travelled on, and scarce asked whither. One object, and but one, I had in view, —to leave far behind me all I held most dear. This done, what mattered it whither chance might bear me ? I had no choice, no plan. Changing

from diligence to diligence, I passed from village to village, from city to city. A fire within my brain consumed me, and I was tortured by a parching thirst; yet stay I could not. A restlessness over which I had no control—a delirious apprehension of being pursued, I knew not by what or whom—urged me ever forwards, and made the idea of a pause insupportable to me. “Onward—onward!” was my inward cry; “some time my destiny must be accomplished—somewhere I shall find a grave.”

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

ONE evening, after I had as usual sat in perfect silence during the day, the sudden exclamation of my fellow-travellers, "Mont Blanc ! Mont Blanc !" arousing my attention, I heard their expressions of ecstatic delight at the grandeur and sublimity of the scene. I too looked at it.

"Young lady," said the gentleman opposite to me, "yonder is Mont Blanc !"

I believe my eyes turned upon him coldly, but I made no reply ; and struck by the strangeness of my manner—probably rendered more remarkable on this day by my approaching illness—I saw him turn to the lady by his side, and whisper something in her ear ; they looked uneasily at me, and then exchanged glances full of meaning

with their other companions. "They think me mad," I said inwardly; and I felt myself smiling bitterly at the contrast of comparative happiness which such a state would have presented with my own. "Poor young creature!" I heard the lady say in a low voice; "so young—so beautiful!" Then in a gentle tone she addressed me: "I fear you are ill; you do not look fit to travel: have you no friend in this neighbourhood?"

"None," I replied.

"Whither are you going?"

"I know not."

I saw looks of compassion pass between the strangers. They whispered together, and again addressing me, the lady said, "You are not able to travel, indeed you are not; you had better remain for this night at the village where the diligence will shortly stop; do let me persuade you. We too shall halt there for a few days, and, if better within that time, you can pursue your journey in our company."

I believe I was too ill to comprehend her

meaning; but even had it not been so, however conscious of her kind intentions, it would have been impossible for me to express for human sympathy a gratitude which it was then beyond my power to feel. I was impatient of her efforts to engage my attention, and still more so of her attempts to influence my movements. I made no further reply, and in silence the party reached the door of the village inn.

I allowed all to precede me, but observed that the gentleman who had first addressed me remained beside the coach-door, ready to assist me in alighting. On rising I became sensible of an extreme dizziness in my head, and losing all power over my limbs, was just aware of falling forwards. I recollect no more, until slowly, and with a sense of extreme exhaustion, I once more awoke to the full consciousness of my misery. My first feeling afterwards was one of deep and bitter repining. "Death itself rejects me as a worthless prize," I thought; "I cannot even *die*."

Upon opening my eyes after a long sleep, which proved the crisis of my illness, they fell upon a tall emaciated female figure sitting beside my bed, and I saw myself regarded with a look of tender interest. "You are better, dear young lady," she said, "thank God!"

I could not say Amen, I could not even bring myself to utter an answer to the kind inquiries of my attendant; and she presently ceased to importune me with them, contenting herself by silently and gently administering to my comforts. After some time she left me, and I heard her in a whisper leave every necessary injunction with a young girl who took her place.

I had no idea as to where I was, nor did I feel the smallest curiosity on the subject. It was only when sufficiently recovered to sit up a little in my room that, touched partly by the interest which this benevolent woman manifested in a desolate stranger, and in part by the melancholy which marked her countenance, I asked my young attendant who she was.

“Madame Werner,” she replied; “the widow of a man who lost his life when acting as guide to a party in ascending Mont Blanc. He and his eldest son were buried under an avalanche four years ago; and not long after, her only daughter, a beautiful girl of nineteen, upon the eve of marriage, fell down a flight of stone steps, and injured her back so severely that she is now deformed and at times suffers dreadful pain. But she is so patient and cheerful that every one loves and pities her; and indeed she is now even a greater favourite than when she was the prettiest and most graceful girl in the village.

“Her mother is never seen to smile; but she is so gentle and resigned, and so good in sharing the little she possesses with those poorer than herself, that the people here all love her, and would do anything for her. Her case excited so much interest in the neighbourhood that a subscription was made for her, and she is now in comparatively comfortable circumstances.”

Without any inquiries upon my part, my young

informant went on to tell me that the morning after my arrival in the village, the medical man, who had been called in by my kind fellow-travelers, pronounced my illness to be a brain fever of the most dangerous description. During the first few days I was attended by the benevolent lady herself. When obliged to pursue her journey, she left a sum in the hands of the innkeeper, more than sufficient to provide for all my wants and repay the trouble my attendance might occasion ; at the same time entreating that nothing which could contribute to my comfort might be neglected.

It was upon her departure that Madame Werner, ever on the watch for opportunities to do good and serve the suffering and unhappy, first sought me, and thenceforward became my tender and devoted nurse. For several nights, whilst the fever was at its height, she watched by my bedside. "Indeed," said the girl in conclusion, "had she been your mother she could not have been more anxious upon your account ; you were

so very ill, that but for her care I scarcely think you could have lived."

"Would that she had let me die!" was the bitter language of my heart; "for her kindness, for her tender care, I might have thanked her, but not for *life*."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

ONE day my gentle nurse sat down beside me, and taking my hand respectfully, said, "My dear young lady, you are now able to bear removal. Will you leave this place and come with me? you are unhappy; I will not ask you why—I will not ask anything but that you should make my house your home, and look upon me and my Marguerite as your friends. Notwithstanding your coarse attire, I know we are much your inferiors in rank; still do not refuse me, unless you have another home or dearer friends to go to; in that case I shall say no more."

"I have no friends, no home on earth," I answered; "I will go with you."

The next day I was removed to a small, neat

cottage on the outskirts of the village, and here I have since remained.

My natural repugnance to deceit, which I had felt even when forced by hard necessity to dissemble, now deprived me of all power to invent a plausible tale by which to account for the appearance of one so young, alone and friendless, in a strange land. I felt that, although my generous friend had not required it, some explanation was due to her, but I attempted none; and true to her promise, she never asked me for any. I was unhappy, friendless, homeless—she required no more; having suffered herself, she could feel for others; and to be in sorrow of any kind was enough to awaken her sympathy.

Upon the evening of my removal I first saw Marguerite, and found my heart at once and irresistibly attracted towards her; and this feeling has increased daily ever since I took up my abode under the same roof. For six years has this gentle girl been my sympathising friend and companion; and without manifesting any curiosity as to the

hidden source of my sufferings, she has untiringly endeavoured to console me under those sorrows which she instinctively feels to be far beyond her own. Her sweet and resigned countenance, and the soft tones of her voice, have been as medicines to my troubled soul, and often stayed its wild commotion when nothing else could have done so.

Marguerite has been better educated than is usual in her rank in life, and still seeks every source of improvement. She often reads to me for hours together; and although at these times my mind is generally absorbed in its own gloomy reveries, there are moments in which I am aroused by her intelligent remarks, and the delicacy of feeling and power of thought which they display, into some degree of interest in the subject of which she speaks, and am led to sympathise ever more and more with herself. She often brings me the journals published in my own country, which I glance over with avidity, in search of the names of those dear ones who are still alive, though dead to me.

Twelve months ago Marguerite one day entered my chamber, leading a beautiful child, about four years old, with curling auburn locks flowing over a neck fair as alabaster. "Fraulein Marie," she said—it was by this name alone that I was known—"I have brought you a little favourite of mine, the daughter of Ernest Harrenfeldt, the farmer who supplies us with fruit and vegetables. I love children so much myself, I find in them such a resource from heaviness of heart, that I fancied it might do you good to see her."

"I once loved children too," I replied, gazing at the bashful, blushing infant before me.

"And you could love them still, dear lady."

I looked at her, but did not speak; when, silently and with a sigh taking its hand, she led the little rejected one from the chamber. My heart yearned after it, and some days later I asked Marguerite why she had never again brought the child to see me.

"I wished to do so, dear lady, but I thought you looked as if it recalled"—she hesitated and

coloured; "I fancied that you would rather not see her."

"You were mistaken, Marguerite, I would gladly have her sometimes with me; let her come this afternoon."

Henceforth the little girl has been my almost daily companion. At first she seemed to fear me, but this feeling soon disappeared, and it is long since she has learned to feel quite at home in my apartment, and to enter it at all hours, as if assured of welcome.

Sometimes, with the instinct of a tender sympathising nature, the little Franciska observes that I am disinclined for noise or prattle, and then she quietly seats herself at the window to watch the passers-by, or sits at my feet looking at the books of pictures with which Marguerite supplies her. At other times, when encouraged by a kind look or word, she nestles fondly in my bosom, and talks to me of her home, her mother, brother, sisters; sometimes, but rarely, alluding to a grandmother, whom I can see she fears much

and scarcely loves. Marguerite, evidently with a desire to awaken me to further interest in her little favourite, has told me that her parents are both German. The grandmother only belongs to this place, whither the family removed from the neighbourhood of Dresden some years ago.

But Marguerite's kind offices have not been confined to these delicate attentions; she has sought to gain for me comfort of a higher kind, even that happy feeling of resignation by which she is herself sustained, and which springs from what I now believe to be the only source of peace on earth—the belief and trust in God as a Father and a Friend. No sophistry, no unhallowed prying into things too deep for mortal eye, has ever misled the mind of this admirable girl. With meek humility she listened to the words, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden;” and at the feet of Him who uttered them she has “found rest;” and hither too would she bring me. Alas, she knows not the burthen *I* must bear with me! She says there is mercy for all

through Him who died to save the lost—can there indeed be such for me?

Sometimes—as she talks to me of the love of God, of his power and will to comfort and to save, as she explains to me in all its beautiful simplicity that divine and influential faith which I have hitherto slighted to my own undoing—a gleam of soft and holy light seems to diffuse itself throughout my soul, and a voice like the sound of sweetest music whispers to my heart, “God is a God of vengeance only to the hardened and impenitent; to all beside he is love—love unutterable, inextinguishable, far beyond every conception of the created mind. Believe! and He whom you have hitherto looked upon with dread as an avenging Judge, will turn toward you the mild and glorious countenance of the Redeemer, and say to your trembling, guilty soul, ‘Come, and fear not!’”

Ah how beautiful, how simple is the faith of Marguerite! Would that I had sooner known it! Would that, instead of the crude metaphysical notions, the deceptive fantasies of my youth—all

alike vain, insufficient, and incapable of restraining emotions of evil in the soul—I had early recognized the blessed truths of Revelation! How different would then have been my life, how different my death!

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How shall I write what I have discovered?—I am no fratricide! my sister lives—she lives! let me repeat the words, and look upon them until they have burned into my soul and effaced for ever the dreadful characters so long and deeply branded there. My sister—I have yet a sister! my parents have yet a daughter! Alfred has—

Oh God, I had forgotten! not a fratricide, did I say? where is then my brother? no murderess? where the wretched Barbara? Mercy—for me there is none!

\* \* \* \* \*

[The narrative contains no special account of what had so strangely moved the writer. From

Marguerite the following particulars were subsequently gathered.]

One day at the request of her friend Franciska Harrenfeldt, who with her husband was going for two or three days to a fair at some distance, Marguerite went to the farmhouse to take charge during their absence of the children and their infirm grandmother.

The old woman had latterly shown every symptom of declining strength, and she was now so weak as to be almost helpless. Her mind too seemed rapidly failing, and on this day Marguerite found it almost impossible to interest or amuse her. She was restless and uneasy, and repeatedly inquired after Ernest, Franciska's eldest son, and expressed impatience for his return from the village, whither she had sent him on an errand.

"That is the way grandmother is always talking now till Ernest returns from the post," said Antonia, the eldest daughter; "I wonder what news she expects."

Presently the boy entered the room, and approaching the old woman said, "There, grandmother, I have brought you a letter at last!"

With trembling eagerness she tore it open, rubbed her eyes, and held the paper close to her face, but in vain. "I cannot read it," she said; "Marguerite, will you?"

Marguerite took the letter, which was legible enough. Whence it was written did not distinctly appear; but the writer seemed to be a domestic in the family of a nobleman, and began with an expression of pleasure at having at length heard from her old friend, of whom she had had no news for several years. The letter went on to state, in answer to inquiries which had been recently made by the old woman, that the eldest daughter of the Count, her master, had died eight years previously of cholera.

Upon reaching this sentence Marguerite was interrupted by a hollow groan; she saw the old woman half raise herself from her seat, her eyes starting from their sockets, her hands clenched,

and every feature working convulsively. "My child!" she muttered, and fell to the ground.

With the assistance of a servant-girl and Ernest, Marguerite succeeded in raising and placing her upon the bed: she then despatched the boy for the village doctor, and in the meantime used every effort to restore her. She still lay stiff and motionless when the doctor arrived, and Marguerite already began to fear that life was extinct. Upon some blood being taken from her arm she showed signs of revival; presently her eyes opened, and staring wildly around she exclaimed, "Who said it? who told me that my child was dead?"

"No one said it," replied Marguerite; "your own child, your Franciska, is well. It is but the daughter of the gentleman in whose house your friend lives who is dead."

"My child, my darling child!" she exclaimed; "she was my child! Why did not your mother die instead of you, my darling Barbara? I thought," she added in a muttered tone, "to

have made a lady of you, and you are dead—dead.”

The doctor, Marguerite, and the children looked aghast at each other. “Here has been some foul play,” said the former.

“Leave me alone with her, sir,” said Marguerite in a whisper; “perhaps I shall be able to obtain the truth from her.”

“Do so then quickly,” he replied; “it will soon be too late; either she will cease to exist when the present excitement subsides, or her strength will have failed so completely that she will be unable to think or to speak.”

Sending the children away, Marguerite solemnly addressed the unfortunate woman, told her of her suspicion that she must have incurred some guilt of which the world knew not, and ended by conjuring her, while there was yet time, to make all the reparation in her power by freely and fully avowing what she had done.

At first her hearer seemed not to comprehend her meaning; gradually however Marguerite’s

soothing but urgent entreaties won from her the following strange confession.

To her care as nurse, some five-and-thirty years before, the infant daughter of a German nobleman had been committed immediately after its birth. One evening, a few weeks afterwards, whilst looking at the infant Countess as she lay beside her own little girl in the cradle, she began to think over the very different fate awaiting the two children. The prospect of the one seemed all happiness ; every comfort, every luxury would be hers : no hard work, no struggling with poverty, no anxiety. Her life would be one of ease and pleasure ; she would have rank, riches, friends. "I seemed," said she, "to hear a voice whispering to me, that upon me alone it depended to secure this enviable fate for my own child." At first she had started back in alarm from the temptation, then timidly listened, and in the end yielded to it. Her husband, whose concurrence in the deception it was indispensable to obtain, for a long time

stood out against it, but being a weak man he too at length gave way.

Chance seemed to favour their schemes. The Count and his lady had set out on their journey as soon as the latter was able to travel, and the mother of the Countess, having been confined by a severe illness for several weeks, did not see the substituted infant until a sufficient time had elapsed to account, as she thought, for the change which she perceived in it.

The real daughter of the Count and Countess was kept out of the way as much as possible; and as moreover she did not bear any very striking resemblance to her mother, no suspicion of the fraud which had been practised was ever awakened.

Franciska grew up a modest and beautiful girl, and early became attached to the son of a farmer who lived near her reputed parents, and who had been her playfellow from infancy. They were married when still very young, and upon the

death of Franciska's supposed father they removed along with the widow to the birthplace of the latter in Switzerland. Here they had purchased a farm, and lived prosperously and happily for several years.

The wretched woman concluded by acknowledging, in bitterness of soul, the hand of God in all that had occurred. The child for whose sake she had become guilty, of whom in her short-sighted worldly wisdom she would have made a great lady, and, as she thought, necessarily a happy one, had been cut off by a premature and awful death; whilst the one who had been thus defrauded of her birthright still lived, comparatively poor and humble, but contented, and, as wife and mother, in the full enjoyment of those blessed feelings which form the purest, perhaps the only perfect, bliss of woman's nature.

Upon concluding her story the wretched old woman became again wildly excited, and Marguerite saw the necessity of striving to gain from her at once the name and place of residence of

the parents whom she had so grievously wronged. But her mind unhappily now seemed to lose all further power of recollection; she no longer comprehended anything which was said to her, and shortly fell into a state of profound stupor, from which all efforts to arouse her were fruitless. Before the following morning she was no more.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

UPON returning home Marguerite went to the chamber of the Fraulein, and naturally proceeded at once to repeat to her the extraordinary facts with which her own mind was entirely occupied. At first Marie heard her with her usual listless inattention, but upon Marguerite's uttering the name of Barbara she started from her seat and stared wildly at the narrator. Surprised and alarmed, Marguerite became silent.

"Go on, go on!" exclaimed Marie in breathless accents, grasping a chair which stood beside her for support. Marguerite again went on, until murmuring "It is—it must be so!" Marie fell heavily to the ground.

From a state of insensibility of some duration

she awoke to one of the wildest excitement. She seemed heedless of the presence of Madame Werner and her daughter, and made no reply to their kind and repeated endeavours to soothe and comfort her. Towards evening she became quite exhausted, and threw herself upon her bed, where she lay for some days in a very dangerous state.

[It was when partially recovered from this illness that Marie seems to have made the following and last addition to her melancholy narrative.]

Once again has the arrow of death missed its aim. I live, but feel that life is ebbing fast; my task is almost done; when finished, how welcome death!

\* \* \* \* \*

For some time past my mind has taken a new and strange direction. From the moment I became aware that I had escaped the actual perpetration of the appalling crime of fratricide—equally guilty though I knew myself, alas! in that I had willed its commission—a restless, longing desire to see those most dear to me has supplanted

the dread with which the bare idea of being discovered by them used to fill my soul.

Death, advancing with rapid strides, has already chilled with his icy breath those emotions of mingled pride and shame which till lately were so strong that I would have suffered all the tortures man could devise, sooner than acknowledge so revolting a crime in the presence of those beloved ones. Sunk and degraded in my own eyes, I yet felt a miserable satisfaction in the belief that, whatever might be their conjectures as to my mysterious disappearance and subsequent fate, I still lived in their memory as the Marie of my youthful days of innocence. But, guilty as I am, what right have I to such consolation? why should I spare myself this last, deepest humiliation? Perhaps, when kneeling at my father's—at my Eugene's feet—I have sobbed out my fatal secret with my failing breath, Heaven may look with mercy on the humbled, penitent soul as it departs, and at length—forgive!

\* \* \* \* \*

"The die is cast! I have sent the letter which tells my father and Eugene that their lost Marie still lives, and longs to see them ere she dies. In two or three weeks, at furthest, they may be here. Oh how my heart throbs at the bare idea of seeing them once more! and they—how will they look upon me, the daughter, bride, and—*murderess*? How shall my lips utter the dreadful tale? Shall I live once more to say—*I did it*? I cannot write; my eyes wander; now I see a livid, convulsed countenance, a form writhing in agony; now it stiffens into hideous stillness,—horrible vision, away! Father, kill me not with that icy glance! Eugene, spare—

[Here Marie's narrative abruptly terminates. Along with her manuscript the following additional particulars were submitted to the Translator.]

From the time she wrote her letter home, Marie's strength seemed to be rapidly sinking, and the ordinary expression of calm and settled despair in her countenance, which had seldom

varied during her residence at \* \* \*, was now succeeded by a restless anxiety and a wandering, hurried manner.

Whenever the door opened, to admit either of her tenderly attached friends, she started and fixed a wild inquiring look upon their faces; then, with a strange expression of mingled disappointment and relief, she would heave a deep sigh and sink into apparent unconsciousness; until aroused by any sudden noise without, she would spring forward to the window with feverish energy, and seeing nothing, return and fall exhausted upon the couch.

To the inquiries of her friend, as well as to her entreaties that a doctor might be called in, Marie either returned no answer, or replied in the negative with an irritable impatience quite foreign to her natural manner. Madame Werner began at length to fear her intellect was giving way, and found her only consolation in the idea that, from the unusual circumstance of the Fraulein's having written a letter, and the obvious expecta-

tion which she manifested as to an arrival, there were grounds to hope for the appearance of some friend who should lighten the weight of her responsibility.

## CHAPTER XL.

ONE morning very early a carriage with four horses dashed through the village, and stopped at the house of Madame Werner. Two travellers stepped out of it; one a gentleman seemingly above sixty years of age, with a noble countenance bearing traces of deep suffering; the other a singularly handsome man, whose face wore an expression of profound melancholy, which told that, although young in years, he had already known sorrows of no common nature. Both were apparently in a state of intense anxiety.

“Does Fraulein Marie live here?” asked the younger in a trembling voice.

“She does,” replied the kind Madame Werner, who was instantly at the door to receive the

strangers ; and, " O gentlemen," she continued, " I am glad you are come, for she is ill, very ill."

" Tell her the friends whom she sent for have arrived."

Hastening to convey the message to Marie, a low sobbing was the only answer made to Madame Werner's knock ; and on opening the door, she saw the Fraulein already dressed and standing at the window, her face buried in her hands, and her whole frame trembling with agitation.

As her friend entered and spoke, Marie raised her head, and showed a countenance tearless and bloodless as that of the dead. For an instant she stood pressing both hands violently upon her bosom, as if to still its wild throbbings ; then with an effort of that indomitable energy which even in this terrible moment did not forsake her, she became calm—" awfully calm," as the woman afterwards expressed it—and walked steadily to her couch.

" Let them come," she said.

What passed during that interview none ever

knew, save those who were engaged in it. After some time the door opened, and the old man, wan and haggard, bent under a weight of unutterable sorrow, came forth, followed by his younger companion.

“Do not—oh do not leave her thus!” said the latter in a tone of mingled entreaty and upbraiding. No reply was made by the miserable father, and Eugene, taking his arm, led him unresistingly into an adjoining apartment.

“You will not—you cannot leave her thus, without one pitying look, one word of forgiveness! Oh, think of all she has endured, remember she is still your child! I feel that she is still my Marie—my own beloved Marie,” said the unhappy young man, struggling with his own overwhelming emotions as he gazed upon the wreck before him.

The Count made no answer; the sudden and violent shock caused by finding in the child whom he had so long mourned as lost—whom he had loved and trusted through all the circumstances

of her mysterious disappearance—a *murderess*, was beyond the endurance of a nature simple, pure, and confiding as his. Deep groans burst from his bosom, and he seemed unconscious alike of his friend's presence and entreaties.

"Marie!" at length he murmured in a broken voice, "my child—a fratricide!" and a convulsive shudder passed through his frame.

"No, oh no!" exclaimed Eugene; "Marie is no fratricide!"

"Marie—a murderess!" again ejaculated the father in a tone of anguish not to be described.

Eugene could bear no more. Overpowered by his own sufferings, and unable longer to look upon those of his friend, he hastily left the room. At the door he encountered Madame Werner, and on the instant the thought occurred to him that it might yet be possible to arouse the miserable father from his agony of despair through the means of his newly-discovered daughter. Hitherto the fact that such a being existed seemed to have fallen unheeded on his ear. He heard

his Marie, his cherished, long-loved child, confess herself a murderess—he heard no more.

Hurriedly, and in words rendered almost unintelligible from the excess of his emotion, the young Count inquired concerning Franciska, and was informed by Madame Werner that she was in momentary expectation of her arrival, and that her eldest daughter was at present in the house. Eugene paused for an instant, and then said, “Does she resemble—no—let me see her.”

Madame Werner led the way to another apartment, and Eugene entering saw before him a beautiful girl of about ten years old. He gazed upon her in speechless astonishment: it seemed to him that Marie, the Marie of his childhood, stood before him.

“Come, come with me, and bring her also!” he exclaimed to Madame Werner in stifled accents.

The Count did not raise his head at their approach, and Eugene, having in vain uttered his name, said, “Will you then refuse to see your daughter—your unknown child?”

The Count lifted his eyes to his friend's face with a bewildered expression, but could not speak. Suddenly his attention became arrested by the young girl ; he started, looked at her, at Eugene, and at Madame Werner alternately, with a glance of the utmost astonishment.

“ Your grandchild ! ” said Eugene ; “ your eldest daughter's child.”

The Count made no answer ; his eyes were fixed upon the lovely face before him, and his arms opening as it were involuntarily, Madame Werner led the little Antonia forward, and placed her within them ; the old man's head fell upon the shoulder of the young girl, and tears at last came to his relief. Once he held the astonished child, who was now weeping from sympathy, at a little distance from him, and looking at her long and fondly, as if his Marie, innocent as beautiful, were indeed restored to him, clasped her again and again to his bosom.

Eugene, the tender lover, faithful through past years to the memory of his betrothed, faithful to

her still although her guilt had broken his heart, now returned to Marie's chamber.

He found her still kneeling where he had last seen her, when imploring her father's pity and forgiveness; her form supported by the couch, her face upturned, her eyes still fixed upon the door, and her countenance so rigidly calm, so pale and marble-like in its expression of hopeless misery, that for a moment he paused, and doubted whether the pulses of life had not ceased to beat for ever. He approached her softly, and as he offered to raise her, whispered, "Marie!"

She did not start, she did not move, but her eyes turned upon him with a look of unutterable meaning.

"Marie!" he repeated, kneeling by her side, and gently passing his arms around her wasted form; "Marie, my lost love!"

A smile of exquisite beauty flitted across her face: as it disappeared, her head sunk upon the shoulder of her lover, and tears, long pent-up tears, a first token of mercy, fell in torrents from

her eyes. He raised her tenderly, placed her on the couch, and supported her on his bosom. Their tears flowed on for hours; but neither spoke, until perceiving that exhaustion began to overpower Marie's feeble frame, and that repose was now indispensable, Eugene rose to leave her.

He then ventured to propose sending for a doctor. A ghastly smile, and a pressure of the hand upon her heart, was her only answer. Seeing him about to leave the room, she said with an apparently strong effort, "My father!"

"He is not well, dearest; he cannot yet—"

"Oh yes, I know he cannot see me," she said hurriedly; "I know he must abhor as much as he once loved me. O Eugene, comfort him, pray to God to comfort him!"

## CHAPTER XLI.

THE day passed over; it was evening, and the Count Eugene sat alone when Madame Werner entered. He did not heed her, grief had overwhelmed him, and it was not until she had made several attempts to arouse his attention that he heard her say with a quivering voice, "The Fraulein bids me tell you that she would like to see you again tonight. She will ring her bell when ready to receive you. O sir, can nothing be done for her? she is so good, so kind; but she cannot live, unless something speedily be thought of to relieve her."

"Has she been long so very ill?" asked the Count.

"She has never been well since her arrival

here; sometimes she seemed a little better in health, but her countenance always expressed utter misery. Many a night she passed without ever going to bed; and at times would shut herself up, and when I knocked would not answer; and if I went in, to leave a little food upon the table, I found her sitting as if unconscious, with her eyes fixed, and a look of despair in her face. At first I used to speak and try to rouse her, but she only stared wildly, and said strange words; and then I thought it would be better to take no notice of her for a time, and found that in this way she became composed more quickly."

"And how did she usually employ her time?" said Eugene.

"Principally in reading, and sometimes she seemed to like to have her sister's youngest child with her. How strange that was! it seemed the voice of nature, although she knew it not; the Fraulein was so fond of that little girl! The only time I ever saw her smile was one day when Franciska was prattling to her about her parents

and home ; but oh what a smile that was ! never had I seen one like it before ; never, I hope, may I have to look upon one such again. She used to talk a great deal to my poor daughter too, and seemed to wonder how she could be so contented and cheerful—suffering and disappointed, as she had been, in all her hopes ; and I think it always seemed a relief to her to have Marguerite with her, especially when she had been hearing her read the Bible, in which my afflicted child finds all her comfort and consolation.”

She left the room, and the Count remained absorbed in his own gloomy reflections, awaiting the bell which was to summon him to Marie. At length he became uneasy, and determined to go to her chamber.

He listened for a moment at the door, and heard no sound,—knocked, but received no answer. Again he knocked, still there was silence. Alarmed, he gently opened the door and looked in ; all was darkness.

Suddenly the light, which had sunk into the

socket, shot up brilliantly and illuminated all around. Eugene saw only the bed where lay the form of his once—his still beloved Marie, her eyes closed as if in sleep, and her face calm and peaceful, though furrowed deeply with the lines of grief—grief now past for ever ! Some writing-paper lay before her, and a pen which had dropped from her hand.

A cry burst from the lips of her lover, and reached the ears of Madame Werner and her daughter, as they too sat waiting with increasing anxiety for the expected sound ; they hurried to the room, and entering found Eugene lying upon the bed unconscious as the cold form which he held clasped convulsively to his bosom. Assistance was immediately procured to remove him, and whilst all means were resorted to for his recovery, the affectionate Madame Werner, still clinging to a last hope for her beloved friend, led the village doctor, who had just arrived, to Marie's bedside. He saw all at a glance, shook his head sorrowfully, and turning round quietly left the

room. Upon the paper which had apparently occupied Marie's last moments, and which was delivered to the Count as soon as he was able to bear it, the following words were written in an almost illegible hand:—

“My last hour approaches ; I feel it, yet I am at peace. How strange and incomprehensible ! pressed into the grave by sin and suffering, I lay me there in peace. Let me thank thee, O God ! Dare I say, *my* Father ? Whence could peace arise in this breast were it not from Thee ? What but an almighty hand could create it ? Marguerite, messenger of mercy to my ruined soul, mayst thou be blessed ! Father, beloved father, mother, Eugene—forgive—”

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